

1996

"So that I Get Her Again": African American Slave Women Runaways in Selected Richmond, Virginia Newspapers, 1830-1860, and the Richmond, Virginia Police Guard Daybook, 1834-1843

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<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-dy63-ex80>

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**“SO THAT I GET HER AGAIN”:
AFRICAN AMERICAN SLAVE WOMEN RUNAWAYS
IN SELECTED RICHMOND, VIRGINIA NEWSPAPERS,
1830-1860,
and the
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA POLICE GUARD DAYBOOK,
1834 - 1843**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of American Studies

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

Leni Ashmore Sorensen

1996

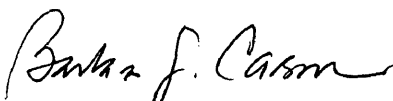
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts


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Approved, January 13, 1997


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my deep appreciation to Gregg Kimball for turning my attention to the Richmond Police Guard Daybook, without which this thesis could not have been written in its present form. Dr. Robert Gross made generous and detailed comments, criticisms and suggestions that were invaluable to my endeavor. I am indebted to Barbara Carson, Adjunct Associate Professor of American Studies and Dr. Leisa Meyer of the Department of History of the College of William and Mary for their willingness to read and comment on this thesis. Finally, I wish to thank Professor Anita Rutman who first suggested that I apply to the program in American Studies at the College of William and Mary, a decision that has been entirely felicitous.

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ABSTRACT

In the histories of the Old South, when discussing runaway slaves, it is most common to find male fugitives as the focus of attention. When women are mentioned, the universal approach has been to note that far fewer women than men became runaways and to list the reasons why that was so. This thesis uses newspaper advertisements for female runaways combined with slave women fugitives listed in the Richmond Police Guard Daybook. The resulting figure invites a closer look at what motivated the flight of women slaves. The experience of women runaways has been marginalized or ignored altogether in the historiography of slavery. Consequently the role that slave women played in their home communities has become mythologized as the strong but passive mother, giving over to male slaves the role of active resistor and potential insurrectionist. The women found for this study belie that common image.

The threat and reality of sale and separation, whipping and other forms of punishment, as well as sexual exploitation were among the motivations that drove women to run away. While abolitionists and the black community

valorized the run to freedom in the North, especially for men, the majority of women who ran away stayed within the state. How that local running fits into the fugitive slave tradition has received little attention. Events in the social, political and economic arenas of the ante-bellum South, particularly Richmond, Virginia, affected individual women when it came to making the difficult choice to run away, and those women are the subjects of this study.

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Introduction

Resistance to bondage is a common theme in accounts of American slavery, and the fugitive slave plays a vital role in this record. Running away, for short or long spells, temporarily or permanently, deprived masters of labor and gave slaves an opening to autonomy and freedom. The act of 'absconding,' as white owners called it, was an important challenge to the dominion of masters and a crucial register of the independent agency of slaves.

It is not surprising, then, that historians seek to discover what sorts of slaves seized control over their lives by running away and under what social circumstances they did so. In this inquiry, scholars have come up, time and again, with the same gendered conclusion: it was overwhelmingly males, we are told, who took to the road, hid in the swamps, or followed the North Star. Women infrequently joined in this rejection of bondage. Why the difference? The common explanation is that slave women were attached to the antebellum plantation not out of false loyalty to masters but through emotional ties to family, whether aging parents, loving husbands, or dependent children. Male slaves were active resisters and potential insurrectionists. Women, strong yet passive, stayed home.

The emphasis on the male fugitive would appear to be justified by the evidence. Studies of runaways have relied chiefly on advertisements placed by owners in eighteenth-

and nineteenth-century newspapers, in hopes of inducing a white reader to help in recovery of the lost 'property.' In such sources, male slaves do predominate among the fugitives: nine out of ten runaways in the eighteenth century, eight or nine in the nineteenth. Based on these findings, there has seemed little reason to question the male bias in studies of slave resistance.

This study was sparked by my interest in female slaves and curiosity about those who ran away. Like previous historians I turned directly to the newspapers and set about transcribing ads for female fugitives. However, a friend called my attention to the Richmond Police Guard Daybook for the years 1834 - 1843, in the archives of the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia. In the course of doing research on a topic unrelated to slavery, he had noticed entries for runaway slaves. Intrigued, I sought out the Daybook and quickly discovered that the conventional wisdom about gender, fugitives, and slave resistance was, if not wrong, then very incomplete. The Daybook, essentially a police blotter of crimes reported, records in one city for a single decade a much larger number of slave women fugitives than the existing historiography would predict. It thus invites reconsideration of the entire phenomenon of running away -- of the changing proportions of male and female fugitives, the motivations for female flight, and the enrichment of the slave community by that tradition of flight.

Owing to the constraints of time, I was able to use the Richmond Police Guard Daybook only for the purpose of determining the aggregate numbers of women runaways. That was sufficient to show that women were a significant presence among fugitive slaves. But to detail the characteristics of the women who ran away, I was obliged to turn to the

newspapers. The advertisements for escaped slaves constitute the principle source for my account of individual women's experiences. The sepia pages of the newspapers and of the Police Guard Daybook give tantalizingly brief glimpses of the women who are the focus of this study, the women who refused to submit to the absolute power of the master demanded by law and affirmed by Judge Ruffin.

A substantial number of the women in my research appear to have run away to keep alive the connections with their families, a "tradition" of which both slave families and masters were fully aware. Those two groups had radically different understandings of the meaning of the act of running. For the master it was a willful "stealing" of the labor owed him, but for the slave family it was a constant and loving example of the tremendous importance of family in the slave community, and the role women played in keeping those bonds strong. The details in the runaway notices reveal that the runaway slave women almost always had been sold or hired away from husbands, children, parents and siblings.

The threat and reality of sale and separation, whipping and other forms of punishment, as well as sexual exploitation were among the motivations that drove women to run away. For slaves, who possessed a limited vocabulary with which to proclaim their demands for freedom, running away spoke louder than words. The Northern abolitionist and the black community valorized the run to freedom, especially for men. However, the majority of women who ran away stayed within the state. How that local running fits into the fugitive slave tradition has received little attention. Events in the social, political and economic arenas of the ante-bellum South, particularly Richmond, Virginia, affected

individual women when it came to making the difficult choice to run away, and those women are the subjects of this study.

Part 1

For historians of American slavery newspaper advertisements are the most frequently used source for fugitive slaves, supplying numbers, physical descriptions, destinations, and supposed reasons for running. From Herbert Aptheker in the 1940s to Michael Tadman in the late 1980s, the figures on runaways have been largely extrapolated from newspaper advertisements. Slave women runaways are rarely included in the discussion. Only in recent works have the numbers of runaways been broken down by gender. In general, male slaves predominate in the examples quoted from the ante-bellum press, and when women are focused on, it is to do no more than explain why women did not run away as often as men. Again and again the demands of childbirth and motherhood have been given as the predominant reasons that kept women from running away.¹

Women are depicted by scholars as being acted upon rather than acting. Men ran away to visit *their* wives and children. Men were flogged for defending *their* wives and

¹ Most histories of slavery emphasize the role of women as “breeder,” and/or as the center of the slave family above any other. When newspapers are used for the percentages of slave women runaways it reinforces the tendency to ignore or marginalize women. Kenneth M. Stampp in *The Peculiar Institution* (New York: Vintage Random House 1956), p. 110, says regarding runaway slaves, “The majority of them were males, though female runaways were by no means uncommon.” This is true of Deborah Gray White in her *Ar’n’t I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), p. 70 as well as John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community, Plantation Life in the Ante-bellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972) p. 114; Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Random House 1976), p. 649 and Herbert G. Gutman *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Vintage Random House 1976), p. 239. The period newspapers themselves were cited but the figures most commonly quoted in the above works came from the work of certain other historians; Peter H. Wood, Gerald W. Mullin, James Sellers, and Judith Kelleher Schafer. Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860* (London: Oxford University Press 1964), sees the city as a magnet attracting rural escapees, adding to the numbers of city runaways, but he did not address women in particular despite the fact that of the 11,699 slaves in the city of Richmond in 1860, 5,063 of them were women.

children. Such approaches do not take into account the impact that the forced separations of mothers from children and wives from husbands would have had on individual women who were themselves undergoing the shifts and changes common to being hired out or sold at the same time.

Herbert Aptheker, writing in the early nineteen-forties, placed his emphasis on slaves as rebels, essentially to refute the imagery of passive, docile, and contented slaves drawn by Ulrich B. Phillips earlier in the century. Thirty years later in *Roll Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* Eugene Genovese portrayed a much more vibrant and active slave society than had earlier historians. He described a slave culture where work, religion, education, and home all formed a larger web of slave life, possessing greater depth and complexity than previously seen. So too with rebellion. Slaves were neither all docile and content nor were they all rebels constantly simmering in discontent. The pragmatic ability to recognize when and where rebellion was practical and the uses of everyday small acts of protest were skills the slave community had to develop within itself and pass on to their children. When slaves appeared docile there might be good reason, just as there were situations in which confrontation was worth the consequences. For Genovese asked, "What judgment should be rendered on a society the evils of which reach such proportions that only madmen are sane enough to challenge them?"² With this question he concludes his comparison of slave revolts and insurrection in the Americas. Large scale insurrections which broke out in such places as Jamaica, Haiti, Brazil, and Surinam were never seen in the United States, despite the anxiety and fantasies of

² Genovese, *Roll Jordan*, 595.

American whites. Power of arms, superior numbers and wary vigilance on the part of slaveholders typified the situation throughout the Old South, largely precluding the possibility of conspiracy and insurrection on a scale seen in Latin America and the Caribbean. For the slave in the American South, rebellion perforce became an individual enterprise, and running away one of the most characteristic tools of the would-be rebel. Arson, theft, poison, purposeful stupidity, feigned illness were also part of the slave's arsenal of rebellion. Somewhat in the manner of free workers who might strike against a particular oppressive employer, rebellious slaves in the Old South were people making the strongest statement possible within a repressive regime. They demanded freedom as individuals or in small groups, but could seldom act or even see themselves as a collective force.³

How, then, account for the small numbers of women among runaways in the newspaper ads? Seeking an explanation, historians have drawn a composite picture of the slave community that surprisingly resembles the patriarchal system of the surrounding white society. Men run, rebel, and plan insurrection, while women guard the home and family life. The historiography of slavery has often suffered from the truism "All the women are white, all the blacks are men,"⁴ and the study of the fugitive slave is no exception. But how true can this picture be if a quarter of the slaves who ran away were women and successful runaways were arriving in the north in numbers that reached as high as 1000 a year during the 1850s?⁵ Those approximately ten thousand successful

³ Genovese, *Roll Jordan*, 594-598, 649-657.

⁴ This phrase is extracted in brief from the title page of *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*, Gloria Hull, et al., eds. (Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press 1982).

⁵ Genovese, *Roll Jordan*, 648.

runaways, including the likely 2,500 women among them, do not include the many more like Delphy, who was alleged by her unhappy owner in 1837 to have “been runaway for several years,” presumably hiding in Richmond with her husband Isaac. Like Delphy, a great many women achieved some sort of tenuous but often long-term semi-freedom in cities and towns of the South using forged passes or free papers to elude capture.⁶

Historian Peter Wood suggests that the real numbers of runaways would likely be larger than newspaper advertisements would show. In his own work *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina From 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*, he devotes a chapter to the slave runaway. He uses a wide range of individuals as examples, both men and women, found in the *South Carolina Gazette*. He includes in that speculation those slaves who may have returned voluntarily from a spell of laying out, one of the major types of running away, especially for women, while venturing the presumption that women may have run in roughly equivalent numbers to men.⁷

Some historians make a weighted distinction between types of running -- successful escape to the North versus laying out, or playing truant -- giving more value to the former than the latter. For example, Billy G. Smith and others refer to laying out and truancy, especially by women, as if such activity was merely a form of petit-marronage and not a true running away. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese calls running away “an important safety valve.”⁸ Angry at a master or requiring a respite from bondage, a woman might flee to the

⁶ February 4, 1837, *Richmond, Virginia Police Guard Daybook, 1834-1843*, University of Virginia, Alderman Library, Special Collections, Acc. # 1481, M214 P.

⁷ Writing in 1974, Wood gave citations for the work of Gerald Mullin on Colonial Virginia and for the work of Russell L. Blake quantifying the runaway advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*.

⁸ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 319.

woods or hide in the next plantation quarters. Through such gambits, she might gain a little space for herself and avoid the commission of more desperate acts. Consistent with Eugene Genovese's analysis, this characterization deems the act of "laying out" not as rebellion to change the slave system but rather as a bid for a fleeting moment of autonomy within bondage. That was not because they valued freedom less than men; rather, they valued the claims of children and family more.

In Fox-Genovese's view, the small numbers of women who made it North or later composed autobiographies indicate that few ever ran away. And those who did make it to free territory earn greater credit in her account than those who took only a few days off from bondage. Yet, Fox-Genovese is as selective in her choice of sources as slave women were in their use of strategies of resistance. In her extensive bibliography there is no entry for the narratives of escape collected by the black abolitionist William Still and published in 1878.⁹ Still's compendium contains the stories of many successful women runaways. Originating closer in time to the slave era, these women's stories had a freshness that could not be recovered in the twentieth-century testimony of ex-slaves, telling New Deal-era interviewers about the lives of their mothers.

Even an "as told to" narrative of escape should carry authority. In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself*, Harriet Jacobs gave a first person account of her long and torturous escape in 1835. Not only did she steal herself but eventually found freedom for herself and her children in the North. Jacobs was singular not because she ran

⁹William Still, *The Underground Railroad: A Record of Facts, Authentic Narratives, Letters, &c., Narrating the Hardships Hair-breadth Escapes and Death Struggles of the Slaves in their Efforts for Freedom* (People's Publishing Company 1878)

away but because she was able to write her own story. The Slave Narrative has become an important part of African American literature, and rightfully so, but the emphasis placed on those stories has also led to a mythologizing of escape to the North that obscures the more common local experience for runaways and their communities. While the written slave narrative must be taken seriously, those collected experiences must not be given more value than the far more numerous escapes of people who could not write or were never in a position to dictate their stories.

If women are under-represented among runaways, they nonetheless remain a significant presence, whose motives and experiences call for recognition. In *Speculators and Slaves*, Michael Tadman observes that roughly equal numbers of African American men and women were bought and sold in the domestic slave trade, yet men “persistently” account for 75 per cent of fugitives in newspaper advertisements.¹⁰ Interestingly, the Richmond Guard Daybook yields a similar distribution of runaways by sex, while the city’s newspapers provide a decided undercount. It thus seems reasonable to conclude that one out of four fugitives in antebellum Richmond were women. These bold spirits, noted by Tadman and others but neglected in their analyses, occupy center stage here. Undoubtedly, dependent or infant children, commitments to family, and lack of skills or mobility deterred many women from escaping bondage. But these limitations do not account for the large numbers of slave women present in antebellum cities, caught up in the process of being sold, or in transit to a new locale. Under such fluid circumstances,

¹⁰ Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (University of Wisconsin Press 1989), 188.

they might well break for freedom and find refuge in the free black communities of the South. It is time to search them out as unsung figures in the saga of resistance to slavery.

Coming up with accurate numbers of women runaways is difficult. Historians of fugitives in the colonial era have minimized the presence of women, who constitute a mere ten per cent of runaways in the eighteenth-century advertisements studied by Blassingame, Mullins, Windley, and Smith. Only recently has it appeared that the estimate given by Peter Wood in 1974 that women made up close to a quarter of fugitives (23 per cent) may not be exaggerated. In 1993, Freddie Parker discovered in colonial-era North Carolina newspapers a female proportion of 18 per cent. For the nineteenth century, the figures on female fugitives have been noticeably higher, ranging from a fifth to a third of all runaways. The most common estimate is 25 per cent - the same as in the Richmond Guard Daybook. How do we account for this difference? It may reflect a real change over time and/or variations across space, by city or region. Or perhaps the answer lies in the history of the various newspapers themselves, especially their circulation among prospective advertisers and readers.

Table 1 - Percentage of Female Runaways in Selected Studies

<u>18th century</u>		<u>19th century</u>	
Blassingame - 1972	11%	Blassingame - 1972	11%
Mullins - 1972	11%	Genovese - 1972	20%
Wood - 1974	23%	Gutman - 1974	25%
Windley - 1983	10%	Schafer - 1981	32%
Smith - 1991	9%	Tadman - 1989	25%
Parker - 1993	18%	Stevenson - 1993	15%
		Richmond Newspapers	16%
		1830-40, 1850-60	
		Guard Daybook 1834-43	26%

The dates are the publication dates for the authors cited. Sources: Blassingame, Slave Community, 114; Mullins, Flight and Rebellion, 103; Wood, Black Majority, 241; Windley, A Profile of Runaways, 63-146; Smith, Blacks Who Stole Themselves, 175; Parker, Running for Freedom, 70; Genovese, Roll, Jordan, 648; Gutman, Black Family, 239; Schafer, New Orleans, 35; Tadman, Slaves and Speculators, 188; Stevenson, Black Women, 1056.

There have been two major approaches to collecting and interpreting runaway advertisements in newspapers. Transcriptions of the advertisements themselves with some interpretation of the data make up one approach. Two of the most widely cited works are *Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728-1790* by Billy G. Smith and Richard Wojtowicz, and the multi-volume publication that covers the Southern colonies, Lathan A. Windley's *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730's to 1790*. In these works one can read entire collections of advertisements from the newspapers containing physical description, family situation, and reward for capture. In his research Smith found that roughly one out of ten runaways advertised for in the Mid-Atlantic region were women. He compared that figure with those from Windley's calculations for Virginia and South Carolina, which were 12% and 23% respectively.¹¹

Other historians have published both transcriptions of runaway newspaper advertisements and historical interpretations based on such material. In *Stealing a Little Freedom: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1791-1840*, Freddie L. Parker gives transcriptions of 2,145 newspaper advertisements, and in *Running For Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina 1775 - 1840*, he creates a detailed profile of the 2661 men, women, and children found in the advertisements. Breaking down the numbers Parker found, among other characteristics, men made up 82% and women 18%

¹¹ Billy G. Smith and Richard Wojtowicz, *Blacks Who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728-1790* (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press 1989), 13. Smith cites Lathan Algerna Windley, "A Profile of Runaway Slaves in Virginia and South Carolina from 1730 through 1787" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1974).

of the runaways in the North Carolina newspapers. Rightly assuming that the number of times a slave was sold could affect that person's decision to run or stay put, Parker looked at the number of slaves who had more than one owner. Of the 878 slaves for whom that information could be determined more than three-quarters (84%) had had two owners, 13% three owners, while twelve slaves (.01%) had lived under four owners. Sale had been part of the experience for at least 32% of them.¹² Sale meant movement, at the very least to another local plantation, perhaps as far as across the state or into the city. Women would have had the experience, as did men, of walking into new territory, needing to become familiar with an entirely new set of people, both black and white, and with novel terrain.

Despite the common experience of men and women caught in the vortex of sale, relocation and reorientation, in Parker's view the world off the plantation was more accessible to male slaves. Far more than women, men in bondage gained opportunities to escape the master's scrutiny. Hired out to others or granted passes to "visit their loved-ones, and to generally go on errands for their masters,"¹³ male slaves could seize the moment to make a bid for freedom. By contrast, the constraints of child bearing, responsibility for the care of young children and elders, unfamiliarity with the surrounding countryside off the plantation, and difficulty for a woman traveling alone restricted a woman's chance to escape.¹⁴

¹² Freddie L Parker, *Stealing a Little Freedom: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North America, 1791-1840* (Garland Publishing 1994); *Running for Freedom: Slave Runaways in North Carolina 1775-1840* (Garland Publishing 1993).

¹³ Parker, *Running*, 177

¹⁴ Parker, *Running*, 70-1, 144-7, 77-8. The majority of runaways in this study, 2297 in number, would have been agricultural field workers. For the 15% of runaways who were listed as either artisans or house slaves the occupations of blacksmith, carpenter and cooper were the three most common occupations listed for men while those for the women were cook, seamstress, knitter, and weaver.

In the attempt to reconcile the difference between the ratio of women to men in the population (roughly half) and that of women to men among the runaways Parker and Tadman fall back on reasons why women didn't abscond. They might have explored possible reasons for women to seek to escape. Instead, women who ran are lumped in with males and disappear from view. Parker may have noticed women in his text, but the index to his collection of newspaper advertisements barely does. Among references for branded runaways, Guinea-born slaves, mulattos, and slaves passing as white, there is no separate entry for women. The only female fugitives in this index are 'pregnant runaways.'¹⁵

Studies emphasizing rebellion by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slaves have also relied on the newspapers for runaways and other notices of violent reaction to slavery. Gerald W. Mullin's *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*, Herbert Aptheker's *American Negro Slave Revolts*, and Michael P. Johnson's essay "Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799 to 1830," all make extensive use of runaway notices as evidence of the deep conflicts over slavery between master and man, but rarely between master or mistress and woman. Slave women as felons, malcontents, rebels, or fugitives appear infrequently in the interpretive literature, not because such women are absent from the record, but possibly because female rebellion still arouses emotional discomfort.

As remarked earlier, the descriptions of women runaways, if any, are usually followed by reasons why women did not run away. It is not usually possible to get a substantive view of the women themselves, and in any case these studies concentrate on

¹⁵ Parker, *Stealing a Little Freedom*, 875.

slavery prior to 1840. An exception to that general rule is an article by Judith Kelleher Schafer on New Orleans in 1850. She looked at advertisements for runaways and for slaves for sale and hire for just one year in what was considered to be one of the South's largest slave markets. The presence of women as runaways is well-documented in her essay, and she finds a very large percentage (31.7) of women in her sampling. Likely the high number of women in the New Orleans slave population (59.92% in 1850) contributed to the larger number of women runaways, and while the women were present in her figures, her article did not address the possible motives of female runaways.¹⁶

There are published collections of runaway advertisements for the colonial period and up to the 1840s for some Southern states. But for the period of 1830 through the mid 1860s there are no comprehensive lists or transcriptions of female runaways from the newspapers of Virginia. When such advertisements are quoted in essays and books they are rarely transcribed in full, yet the power of the ads and other newspaper articles, even when only used to illustrate a point, can have a lasting influence on our literature, as two examples highlight. The press coverage in 1856 of the Margaret Garner fugitive slave case gave direct inspiration to Toni Morrison for her novel *Beloved*. The two main characters in *Dessa Rose*, by Sherley Anne Williams, came from ante-bellum newspaper articles quoted in Aptheker's *American Negro Slave Revolts*, first published in 1942. Many more slave women wait to be discovered in the archives of the ante-bellum South.

¹⁶Judith Kelleher Schafer, "New Orleans Slavery in 1850 as Seen in Advertisements," *The Journal of Southern History*, XLVII (February 1981), 35.

Part 2

It is appropriate to begin this section by defining what I mean by the phrase “slave women runaways.” I mean any girl or woman who alone or in a group, for a short time or long, left her master’s plantation or farm or the place where she has been hired out, without permission. The reasons for her leaving could be as immediate as wishing to escape a particularly onerous day’s work or visiting locally with family or friends, and as permanent as searching out distant loved ones and successfully escaping from the South. It is the purposeful withdrawing from the master of one’s labor and one’s physical presence that I define as running away. Whether called laying out, unexcused absence, hiding out in the woods, or truancy, for my purpose those are all versions of running away. I think it is an artificial distinction to separate the run to escape the South from the run to escape punishment, sale or some particular task. Being captured, whether by the local Richmond police several blocks from home, or found hidden in the hold of a ship, a slave, especially a repeat offender, would suffer some degree of punishment.

The case from which the epigram that introduces this thesis came involved a slave woman, Lydia, who was shot by John Mann to whom she had been hired for a year. Mann testified that “during that term the slave had committed some small offense, for which the defendant undertook to chastise her; that while in the act of so doing the slave ran off, whereupon the defendant called upon her to stop, which being refused, he shot at and wounded her.” Sued by Elizabeth Jones, Lydia’s owner, Mann was originally found guilty at the local Chowan County court by Judge Daniel of having used “cruel and

unwarrantable” punishment, disproportionate to the offense committed by the slave, as he “had only a special property in the slave.” Despite the legal recognition that “One who has the right to the labor of a slave, has also the right to all the means of controlling his conduct which the owner has,” Mann was held liable for damages owed the owner “for an injury affecting the value” of the slave. Mann appealed the decision to the Supreme Court of North Carolina. Judge J. A. Ruffin took five pages of legal reasoning to render his decision, coming down reluctantly but most decidedly in favor of John Mann.

The power of the master must be absolute to render the submission of the slave perfect. I must freely confess my sense of the harshness of this proposition . . . But in the actual condition of things it must be so. There is no remedy. This discipline belongs to the state of slavery. They cannot be disunited without abrogating at once the rights of the master and absolving the slave from his subjection. It constitutes the curse of slavery to both the bond and free portion of our population. But it is inherent in the relation of master and slave . . . We cannot allow the right of the master to be brought into discussion in the courts of justice. The slave, to remain a slave, must be made sensible that there is no appeal from his master; that his power is in no instance usurped; but is conferred by the laws of man at least, if not by the law of God.

Judge Ruffin closed his decision “Reversed and judgment entered for defendant.”¹⁷

For a slave running from a hired master was as serious as running from an owner. No matter the circumstance running was dangerous business. However, those hours or days of freedom were experiences a slave would not easily forget nor could a master afford to pretend had not happened.

My original research goal was to find women runaways in ante-bellum newspapers. The two decades of advertisements I chose were those of 1830 - 1840 and 1850-1860 in newspapers published in Richmond, Virginia. The newspapers were primarily the

¹⁷ *State v. John Mann, North Carolina Reports, Vol. 13, Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of North Carolina from December Term 1826 to December Term 1830* by Thomas Devereux (Vol II, Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., State Printer, 1914), 167-71.

Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser, including both the daily and semi-weekly editions, and the *Richmond Enquirer*. Other newspapers for the period exist in the archives but often had only a limited publication run, and several of them did not run advertisements for slaves even when carrying ads for other types of merchandise. In these newspaper advertisements I found a total of 230 slave runaways, 193 men and 36 women. Despite the small number of women in the sample, I saw in the newspapers the presence of slaves and slavery on almost every page, suggesting to me the varied circumstances that might combine to drive a woman to run away. The newspaper articles that surrounded the runaway slave advertisements revealed a montage of images of life and attitudes about slaves and slavery in the ante-bellum South, attitudes that would have affected the everyday life of all slaves. Mundane lists of “Negro” clothing for sale by the barrel could be found next to a brief article about the apprehension and execution of five slaves for the murder of their master. The white public could keep up on the latest shocking events or legal pronouncements concerning slaves. One hundred slaves perished in a shipwreck off the Virgin Islands. Thirty-three slaves in one group escaped across the Ohio River. One master sued another to recover possession of a slave woman, while two slave men were ordered to be flogged for possessing forged passes. Black George Allen advertised for his lost or stolen free papers. An advertisement such as the following gave support to the general understanding that slave women were skilled, docile, and above all, available at the whim or need of the reader. “For hire for the ensuing year, a Woman without *encumbrance* - a tolerable good plain cook, and perfectly honest, well disposed, and calculated for a small family,” one advertisement read.¹⁸ The word *encumbrance* appears

¹⁸ *Jeffersonian and Virginian Times*, 1832.

in the original but the emphasis is mine, for “without encumbrance” meant that the women in this case was to be hired out alone, separated from any possible children and certainly other kin or extended family.

There was a brisk trade in slave labor advertised for in the newspapers throughout the 1830s, with many individuals offering slaves for sale or hire or seeking slaves for hire. By the 1850s, the commerce in hired slaves declined sharply in the press. The number of ads fell by seventy-five per cent. Why the change? It is possible that commission agents and other intermediaries took over the business of contracting for labor. At the same time, the local supply of slaves for hire must have dropped considerably, owing to the strong surge of slave sales out of state, especially to the deep South.

Table 2 - Slave Advertisements in the Richmond Newspapers

	1830-1840	1850-1860	Total
Female Runaways	24	13	36
Male Runaways	117	76	193
Runaways Held in Jail	31	6	37
Slaves Offered for Hire	102	45	147
Slaves Wanted to Buy	188	55	243
Slaves Wanted to Hire	1208	302	1510
Slaves for Sale	2425	4623	7048

The figures in Table 2 are based on the thirty-six women and one hundred ninety-three men found in runaway slave advertisements in the Richmond papers for the periods 1830-1840 and 1850-1860. Women constituted 16% or 1 in 6 of the runaways.

My source for the largest number of women runaways was the Richmond, Virginia Police Guard Daybook, 1834-1843. The Guard Daybook entries are the daily listings of crimes committed and reported to the individual watch officer on duty. The entries range from the back doors of business establishments accidentally being left open at night, thefts of goods, breaking and entering, to running away, all seemingly in the chronological order they were reported by the officers on patrol or citizens of the city.

Finding the additional two hundred twenty-four women runaways more than a year after I completed the newspaper search confirmed what I had begun to see in the figures of historians such as Tadman, Gutman, and Schafer. Slave women ran away in much higher numbers than research using only newspapers would reveal. Gutman calculated that “of the first 210 successful runaways listed”¹⁹ in William Still’s *Underground Railroad* one in four was a woman. Clearly running away was not an anomaly or a minor sidelight of the study of fugitive slaves.

If the number of women runaways from just one decade of the Police Guard Daybook was usual throughout the period then it is possible that for the two decades studied, Richmond may have had closer to 500 women runaways rather than the 36 for the two decades found in the newspaper advertisements. Extrapolated for 1800-1860, for the entire state of Virginia, the numbers of women runaways would challenge the usual interpretation of slave women’s role in the legacy of resistance.

Table 3 - Runaway Slave Notices - Richmond Police Guard Daybook

	female	male	total	%
1834	18	53	71	25%
1835	19	63	82	23%
1836	39	74	113	35%
1837	26	72	98	27%
1838	19	39	58	33%
1839	16	58	74	22%
1840	27	88	115	23%
1841	28	108	136	21%
1842	12	37	49	24%
1843	20	51	71	28%

Women comprised a total of 26% or 1 in 4 of the runaway slaves reported to the Richmond police for the time period. I have transcribed the notices for all the women found in the newspapers and thirty-nine of the women entered in the Richmond Police

¹⁹ Gutman, *Black Family*, 239.

Guard Daybook. Those transcriptions appear in the appendix. There is a total of 260 slave women runaways from all sources in this study, comprising 24 percent of the total 1101 runaways.

The ads themselves, whether in the newspapers or the Guard Daybook, do not differ much in style. An owner, or sometime a person representing an owner, gives a more or less detailed description of the runaway, with the reward offered, and a place to contact the owner. Certain phrases appear over and over again as they constitute the format for both advertisements and the wording used in the reports to the police-- "Runaway from the subscriber," or the common closing "The above reward will be given for her apprehension if brought to me or secured in jail so that I get her again." The tone of the ads is not usually much different from those for Tonka beans²⁰ by the bushel or a race horse for sale that one might find on the same page. Only occasionally does surprise or outrage creep into the text, usually in reports of a slave having run away for the second or third time, having stolen the master's possessions, or missing for a considerable length of time.

A year's subscription to the daily *Richmond Enquirer* cost five dollars in 1838. The paper charged 75 cents for the first insertion of an advertisement and 50 cents for additional insertions. By the 1850s and continuing through the decade, the price for a year's subscription had risen to seven dollars while the price for advertisements ranged from 50 to 75 cents for the first insertion and 25 cents thereafter. One did not have to be a subscriber to run an advertisement in the newspaper. Thus the costs of pursuing a runaway could entail the possible \$1.25 to run an advertisement twice plus whatever the

²⁰ Tonka bean was an imported aromatic tropical bean used in the production of snuff and pipe tobacco.

reward an owner offered. There was no charge associated with giving notice to the police for inclusion in the Guard Daybook, but the rewards offered for a slave's return were commonly included in the text of the entry.

I believe such large number of female runaways as found in the Richmond Police Guard Daybook requires a broader interpretation of the role of women in the slave community. Worker and mother, yes, but also a model for resistance by running away and laying-out. If one of the reasons that women ran away was to keep connections with family and friends strong, their example would constantly and powerfully show slave children the deep importance of kin.

Part 3

The cracking leather-bound pages of the newspapers in the archives tell us something of the runaways. Dolly “speaks quick when asked a question,” Viney stutters, Malinda is a “very intelligent woman,” Milly is fat, and has a “pleasant countenance.” Some of the women are pregnant, some have their children in tow. Hannah is “very black, with glossy skin,” Isabella was “quite tidy in her dress and wore earrings,” Fanny was “slew footed.” All had mothers, probably sisters, and most of them likely had or raised children. They had learned from the women around them as they grew to adulthood that running away was an option, a choice, a statement of courage and devotion. Running away had a price, and the price was one that some women were willing to pay more than once.

The Guard Daybook also noted repeat offenders. An entry for September 4, 1837 says, “Mr. Watkin’s Betsey” has run again. One could find the original notice for Betsey written by the police on the page for October 30, 1835. There was a \$10 reward for her return. A great deal about the lives of the forty runaway slave women found in the Richmond newspapers will never be known. Four of the women were being held in jail for return to their masters, and of the remaining thirty-six there is documented evidence of only one woman’s successful escape to the North. Using the data from the advertisements, what follows is an exploration into the particular experience of these runaway slave women, starting with the length of time the women were gone before being

reported, their occupations in house or farm, their possible destinations, and physical descriptions.

While advertisements for runaways most often appeared within two weeks of a disappearance, owners often waited many weeks, months, and in some cases years, before advertising for a slave. The reasons for such a delay are not clear. In one case in the *Guard Daybook* the runaway Cicily Page was reported to the police eight years after the fact. Her owner not only gave a detailed physical description of the girl as he remembered her as an eighteen-year-old but reported the whereabouts of a sister, brother, father, and her stepmother. He concluded that Cicily was a first-rate seamstress and supposed that she may have borne two or more children since she left. If Richard Randolph knew all that, what prevented him from reclaiming the woman? Something complicated was going on in that situation, and I would venture that similarly involved circumstances would have been part of any of the stories the runaway women would tell.

That being said, it is still difficult to gauge what role the cost played in the decision to place or not place an advertisement in the newspaper. Considering the high value even the average field or industrial worker was worth, such a small expense as the approximately two dollars required to place an ad hardly seems prohibitive. There does not seem to have been any expense associated with listing a runaway slave with the police in Richmond, and it is hard to picture a person who owned a slave being unable to afford to run an advertisement in the Richmond press. Yet it took nine months after Tener and her brother Joe ran from Powhatan for the administrator of their former mistress's estate to declare them fugitives, and Milly, her husband Cato, and their three children were gone

two years from Winnsboro, South Carolina, before their master advertised for them in the Richmond press.

Table 4 - Length of Time Before Advertisement or Report of 37 Runaways

1 day	3	3 months	1
2 days	2	5 months	5
3 days	4	6 months	1
4 days	1	8 months	2
5 days	1	9 months	1
7 days	5	11 months	1
9 days	1	2 years	1
13 days	1	2 years, 3 months	1
20 days	2	7 years	1
21 days	1	"several years"	1
2 months	2		

Physical description, possible destination and the reward offered seemed the most important information slave owners wanted known. My findings are comparable with those of Freddie Parker in which he found an occupation listed in only 13 percent of the runaway advertisements in his study of North Carolina runaways. In Richmond during the 1830s, out of advertisements for twenty-three females, only four of them listed an occupation. Mary was "a good Cook and House Servant," Lizzie and Maria were "household women servants," and Milly was "an excellent cook and seamstress." Of one hundred seventeen male runaways only twenty-two listed an occupation. During the 1850s only one of the advertisements gave a hint at a particular woman's work skills, when George W. Allen of Richmond, advertised for "my servant woman Fanny," possibly alluding to Fanny's position as a house slave. As for the male slaves in that same decade, only fourteen of them, out of a total of seventy-six runaways, had a skill or occupation noted. Field work or industrial labor would have been the daily job of most slaves, men and women alike. The possible opportunities for greater autonomy open to the urban

house slave were not within the reach of the majority of the women in my sample, who were most likely field hands or industrial workers. That impediment did not seem to deter either men or women from running away.

Of the fifteen women runaways in the newspapers for whom a destination was given, eleven were supposed to be heading for urban centers: Fredericksburg, Baltimore, or Richmond. Nothing the slaveholder could do prevented contacts among slaves living in the cities, the gangs of industrial slaves, rural slaves, and the free blacks. Age was no hindrance to a determined woman bound for a city;

July 11, 1833

Five Dollars Reward - Left my house on Friday, the 7th inst., a tall old black woman, named JUDY. She may be shulking [sic] in Richmond or its vicinity. She has relations in Fredericksburg, where she may have endeavored to get. The above reward will be paid if she is secured so that I get her.²¹

Surely Judy was following the tradition of the women who raised her, who taught her what a woman does to keep the ties strong between “relations.” One walks fifty miles if that is what it takes. Wilma King makes the point well, “A part of every child’s socialization was the preparation for freedom. The Missouri-born Lucy Delaney remembered that her mother ‘never spared an opportunity’ to encourage her children to run away.”²²

The texts of the ads often unconsciously revealed the sexual attractiveness the young girls and women held for their masters. Skin color was just one of the physical

²¹ *Daily Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, July 11, 1833.

²² Wilma King, “Rais your children up rite”: Parental Guidance and Child Rearing Practices among Slaves in the Nineteenth-Century South,” *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South*, ed Larry E. Hudson, Jr. (Univ. of Rochester Press 1994), 157.

descriptors used when listing a runaway. Hair, teeth, and deportment were also noted. Sally was “well formed and very good looking,” several women were described as “likely,” “thick” or “chunky.” Ann Ford, who by her master’s description was “nearly white,” also possessed “features regular and good, and quite genteel looking.” Richard Randolph had taken notice of his slave woman Cicily’s fingers, which were “long and tapering.” The eighteen-year-old girl was “rather blackish, her figure very good, slender and straight.” Phrases such as these indicate how closely masters observed the slave women in their households and farms. The women were described in gradations of skin tone ranging from “nearly white” to “very black,” while their bodies were “well proportioned,” “stout built,” “a large, black, young wench,” and “unusually likely in face and person.” In the advertisements large numbers of slaves were described as “bright,” “yellow,” or “will attempt to pass as white,” terms that confirmed the ongoing sexual contact between the races.

Table 5 - Descriptions of Color Used in the Newspaper Advertisements

	1830s	1850s
Mulatto, Bright Mulatto, Dark Mulatto	6	3
Brown, Dark Brown	3	2
Dark	2	
Black, Very Black	4	3
Indian	1	
Unstated	9	6

Very late in my research I learned the fate of one of the women runaways I found in the newspapers. Nancy Grantham is the only woman who I know for certain found her freedom, the only woman in my study who had the opportunity to tell of her experience as a slave, the only woman to give her personal reasons for running away. Just as the *Guard Daybook* solved my problem of too few women runaways, close reading of the narratives

of the Underground Rail Road collected by William Still provided the answer to the fate of Nancy Grantham.

In 1858 William Christian advertised for the “bright mulatto” runaway Nancy Grantham, “sometimes calling herself Mary. She has bright black eyes, long black eyelashes, thin visage, bushy head of hair of sandy color, straight slab-like form, and steps long when walking, and is about fifteen years old.” She was reported by her master to have relatives in Richmond. Perhaps Christian hoped she would return voluntarily, especially as she was so young. Young Nancy left his farm in early October 1857, but he did not advertise for her return till February of the following year.

In a reversal of the usual trade pattern for slaves in the 1850s, Nancy and her sister had been brought to Virginia from Alabama and sold. They were both mulatto daughters of their former white master. Nancy had worked in the cotton fields in Alabama, but in Virginia she was put to work in the house of her new master Dr. William Christian. Evidently he took a sexual interest in Nancy’s sister, and when she refused to comply, he had the girl “scourged” and sold back South to New Orleans. Nancy became the next object of his sexual advances. “The very day before I escaped,” she later reported, “I was required to go to his (her master’s) bed-chamber to keep the flies off of him as he lay sick, or pretended to be so . . . in talking with me, he said he was coming to my pallet that night, and with an oath he declared that if I made a noise he would cut my throat. I told him I would not be there.” To avoid him Nancy slept in another room that night, causing her master to react with great anger and beat her “awfully” the next day. At that she ran

away. "Secreted on a boat," and aided by the Underground Rail Road in Richmond Nancy made her way to Philadelphia and narrated her story while there.²³

The accuracy and credibility of Nancy's story was enhanced for me as I read once again the description of her placed in the newspaper by William Christian. Without using the word pretty it is clear that he had favorably noticed her bright black eyes, her long eyelashes, her walk. We are told in Still's account that Christian's wife, herself the mother of nine children, also attempted to beat the girl, but Nancy fended her off. The wife may well have been just as disturbed at her husband's sexual interest in the sisters as they were. Had Nancy and her unnamed sister been sold from their original home in Alabama because of their obvious kinship to the master on that plantation? Her narrative does not say, but I would assume it played some part. Such a biological relationship would have likely been visible to the eye of any family, guests, and the plantation's slave community. Nancy and her sister were members of the population of 412,000 visibly mulatto slaves resident in the South by the end of the decade of the 1850s.²⁴ Whatever the particulars of the original sale, Nancy experienced slavery in two very different regions of the South and gave her personal reactions to both. As later published by her interviewer in Philadelphia, Nancy "had 'seen more flogging under old Christian' than she had been accustomed to see in Alabama; yet she concluded, that she could hardly tell which State was the worst; her cup had been full and very bitter in both States."²⁵ In her narrative Nancy does not corroborate her former master's notion that she had relatives in Richmond. Perhaps,

²³ Still, *The Underground Rail Road*, 459-60.

²⁴ Joel Williamson, *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (New York University Press 1984), 63.

²⁵ Still, *The Underground Rail Road*, 460.

instead of being relatives, any acquaintances she may have had in Richmond were the people connected to the Underground Rail Road, people who could hide her until plans could be put in place for an escape by boat. All I know about Nancy's life is contained in a brief page and a half.

Although laws concerning fugitive slaves had been on the books since the seventeenth-century in Virginia, in the 1830s the activities of Northern Abolitionists deepened the concern of slave holders, and the laws were further tightened. Restrictions that covered all types of potential transportation of runaways out of the state were put in place. "Rivers, bridges, ferries, and Northerners" were specifically targeted as part of the attempt to keep slaves from escaping by water. The railway came under scrutiny with the passage of a bill in 1837 to prohibit "transportation of slaves on rail-roads without proper authority."²⁶ In the advertisements Masters of sailing vessels were "cautioned" against aiding or "carrying away negroes," and a certificate of inspection from a licensed pilot was necessary before a boat could leave the port in Norfolk.²⁷ Passes, free papers, and the help of whites, as well as the accusation of outright theft of these owners' slaves by whites, is a recurrent theme in the notices. Nine out of twenty-three advertisements in the 1830s, and two of the thirteen ads in the 1850s, carried such warnings. With so many whites aggressively involved in the policing of slaves it was particularly galling to slave owners when they suspected fellow whites to be complicit in the escape of slaves. It was bad enough when that troublesome and conscious species of chattel ran away on their

²⁶Philip J Schwarz, "The full and perfect enforcement of our rights": Fugitive Slaves and the Laws of Virginia," (Chapter 5, unpublished manuscript), 15.

²⁷ Tommy Lee Bogger, *The Slave and Free Black Community in Norfolk, 1775-1865* (University of Virginia, Ph. D., 1976, University Microfilms 77-7603), 265.

own. For in so doing they stole themselves, a crime in a world in which a slave was the same as any other property, real or personal, that could be bought and sold, given as gift or inheritance, or used to pay a debt whether at the bank or gaming table. When whites were thought to have helped in an escape, even more laws were being broken.

Advertisements often supposed that whites had either seduced the slave to run or stolen them for their own profit.

Once slaves were determined to be gone, no matter the route they may have taken to escape, the owner had the recourse of offering a reward to encourage people to be vigilant in helping find the missing property. Reflecting as much the owner's financial situation as the relative value of the original investment and the future work the women had "stolen," the rewards for their return ranged from as little as \$5 to a high of \$150 across the two decades. The rewards for men over the two decades also ranged widely, with several rewards of \$200. For "very black" Peter in 1831 the reward offered was an astounding \$750. Returning runaway George would earn the finder \$5, while for Edmond, a "white mulatto" the reward offered was \$100. For the women the prices ranged from \$5 for Judy to \$150 each for Eliza and Mary. The rewards varied just as widely in the 1850s. Why individual owners were so uneven in their urgency to retrieve their property or at least to express it by the amount offered in reward is not clear. While being old usually kept the reward low, being a "bright mulatto," or "almost white," did not necessarily raise the fee. Nancy Grantham's reward was on the high end of the scale at \$75, but \$25 of that was to go to whom ever identified Nancy's "harborers, with sufficient proof to convict." Historians might emphasize the sometimes larger rewards offered for

men over women, especially artisans, but in general there seems to have been little difference between the worth to the owner in retrieving the labor of a man or a woman field laborer.

Table 6 - Average Rewards Offered for Female and Male Runaways.

	1830s	1850s
Women	\$45	\$49
Men	\$51	\$47

Motherhood may have played an important role in keeping most women from running away but of the thirty-six women I found in the newspapers, a full 25 percent ran away with a total of eleven children by their sides and in their arms. Sarah, Lydia, and Milly were in their twenties, and Lizzie was in her forties. Lizzie's master seems to have had opportunity to observe her and her child carefully. The boy Edward was described as "six years old, small but intelligent for his age, and having a speck or star in one eye, believed to be the right." Sarah, Milly, Henrietta, and Leanah were known to be pregnant. Henrietta was seventeen-years-old and the other three women were in their twenties. Children in tow, Lydia ("her husband lives at Mr. Diddep's) and one of the Millys ("she has a husband belonging to Gen., working on the Island, where it is likely she is") were thought to be running to find or join their husbands, husbands from whom they had been sold away.²⁸ Young women in their twenties not only ran away in greater numbers, but they took their children with them in greater numbers. They also comprised the largest number of women who were said to be pregnant. Here it is important to remember Lucy Delaney's mother who "never spared an opportunity to encourage her children to run away." In one case in 1860, Isabella, who was "quite tidy and wore ear-rings," ran away

²⁸ *Daily Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, July 25, 1833, October 23, 1833.

from Caroline County, back to the farm where her child was still living, even though she had been hired out at various other locations for several years. It was by example that Delaney's mother's lesson was driven home.

Table 7 - Ages of Women Runaways Including Their Accompanying Children

Under 14 years	11
15-19 years	6
20-29 years	13
30-39 years	4
40-49 years	2
50 or older	1
Women - age not listed	11
children - age not listed	2

Just as having children did not necessarily prevent women from running away, women in this sample ran away throughout the year regardless of the weather. The end of the harvest in the late fall and early winter was a logical time to run, given the reduction of the work load, and thus despite the likelihood of cold or rain those months saw the largest number of runaways. The next highest numbers of runaways came during the height of the growing season in June and July, and while that does not seem a very good time to plan an escape, perhaps supervision was laxer in those months.

Table 8 - Times of the Year the Women Ran Away

January	3
February	4
March	4
April	3
May	1
June	5
July	6
August	1
September	3
October	3
November	7
December	7

The 47 women in Table 7 are a combination of 33 of the women found in the newspapers and 14 women from the Police Watch Book.

Malinda and the other Milly had the company and support of their husbands when they ran, while Mary went off to find and join her husband. The extended family and community were also magnets for the runaways. Eight women, among them Old Judy who was on her way to Fredericksburg, were assumed to be trying to make their way to farms or towns where family members still lived.

Advertisements were sometimes quite specific about where masters assumed runaways were headed, but they gave little or no evidence of the specific conditions that the women were running from at that moment. No prior beatings or other punishments were mentioned in any of the advertisements. If any explanation was given it was of the “through no fault of my own” or “without cause” variety. It is the silence about the immediate circumstance that speaks so loudly about the slave owner’s resistance and refusal to acknowledge the constant indignities of slavery.

None of the women in this study of antebellum runaways appear to have been marked by punishments commonly seen in the eighteenth-century advertisements in which runaway slaves, both men and women, were described as having been branded, wearing irons, or badly scarred or disfigured by punishment. The marks that are mentioned for my sample of women could be as much from accident or medical treatment as from punishment. Viney had a scar on her forehead. Hannah, who broke from jail after having been caught as a runaway, had a small scar on her left wrist. Both Maria and Rachel had scars on their necks from having been cupped. Given the genetic tendency in many persons of African racial heritage to develop keloids (a type of raised scarring) over even small wounds, such marks would have been visually distinctive no matter their origin.

Thus it cannot be said with certainty that a particular circumstance of brutality drove those particular woman to run. The threat of punishment was just one of many reasons for a slave to run; other threats existed that were equally powerful.

Being a runaway was not the only way to be listed in antebellum newspapers if one was an African American and a slave. Being caught and held in jail was another. In addition to being sold or hired or sought after as runaways, slaves and free blacks were mentioned in the general run of news when they became involved in the courts, or were noted for some particular accomplishment that might provide confirmation of racist assumptions or amusement to the readers of the press: In 1856 the *Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser* reported that Mary, “a slave, was ordered to be punished for using obscene language towards Mrs. Shick.”²⁹ Twenty years before an “Old Negress - Joice Beth” was hailed for having attained the great age of one hundred sixty-one years. She was said to have formerly belonged to General Washington and could be seen on exhibit at Wheeling, Virginia.³⁰ That the true age of Old Joice was later proven to be closer to ninety some odd years did nothing to keep people from believing anything strange about a “negro.”

²⁹ *Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, December 2, 1856.

³⁰ *Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, July 10, 1835.

Table 9 - The Women Runaways:

1830's Newspapers					
Name	Reward	Age	Color	Marks / Physical Description	Possible Reasons, Probable Destination
Hannah	*	26	black	scar on left wrist	unknown
Mary	\$10	28	dark brown	lost teeth	to husband
Fanny	*	37	*	*	Norfolk
Dolly	\$10	20	dark brown	tall, unusually likely	Hanover
Lucinda	\$20	40	*	small, active	forged free papers
Eliza	\$100	16	bright mulatto	well grown, likely	seduced away by whites
Mary	\$150	*	mulatto	long hair	Williamsburg
Jinny	\$150	23	dark	wearing man's apparel	New Kent Co.
Viney	\$5	16	dark	scar, long toes	Richmond, the Market
Judy	\$5	old	black	*	Richmond, or Fredericksburg
Sarah	\$25	23	mulatto	pregnant, w/1 child	Ran with Arianna, "will attempt to make their way to the north."
Arianna	\$25	19	mulatto	tall, spare, feet small	
Lydia	\$10	23	*	small, speaks "short," w/ 8 month old baby	Richmond, to husband
Milly	\$100	26	dark mulatto	*	Richmond, to husband
Lizzie	\$30	40	*	stout, well formed, w/six year old boy	instigated by whites
Maria	\$20	39	*	scar on neck	instigated by whites
Rachael	\$20	30	brown	mark on neck	*
2 women	*	*	*	w/2 men	North
Malinda	\$50	25	Indian complexion	very intelligent, w/husband	Bradford, Giles, or Kanawa Co.
Tener	*	50	black	w/brother Joe	Michaux's Ferry
Milly	\$75	26	*	pregnant, w/husband, 3 children	left S.C. 1831, gone 2 years
Hannah	\$20	20	very black	glossy skin	King William Co.

1850's Newspapers

Lucretia	\$100	35	dark brown	tall	forged free papers
3 women	*	*	*	*	Portsmouth
Martha	\$50	17	black	stout, long hair	*
Henrietta	\$50	17	mulatto	hair platted, pregnant	*
Isabella	\$20	*	dark brown	tidy, earrings, w/1 child	Caroline Co.
Nancy	\$75	15	bright	sandy hair, thin	Richmond
Grantham			mulatto		
Fanny	\$20	25	black	genteel, slew footed	Richmond
Leanah	\$25	25	dark mulatto	pregnant	Baltimore
3 women	*	*	*	escaped w/7 others	Canada

Police Guard Daybook Runaways, 1834-1843 (a selection)

Patsy	\$10	*	*	ran from Hanover Co.	*
Rose	*	23	*	child living at Mr. Hubbards	Court House Tavern area, Richmond
no name	*	21	mulatto	likely, w 1 child	Shockoe Hill
Delphy	\$50	*	*	I child, gone "several years"	"seen on the Baison," Richmond
Luckey	\$100	*	*	gone 9 months	*
Julia	*	22	*	2nd time, walks with feet turned out	hired to James Supple of King William Co.
Sally	\$10	20	brown skin	well formed, very good looking	mother at John Allen's, father at R. Minor's
Betsey	*	*	*	large with child	*
Betsey	\$10	*	*	"has run again"	*
Betsy	*	*	dark brown	chunky, thick lips	*
Ann Ford	\$20	22	"nearly white"	eyes gray, "quite genteel looking"	*
Becky	*	15	black	slim, long nose	*
Cicily Page	\$100	18	"rather blackish"	been gone 7 years, 1st rate seamstress	relatives in Norfolk
Lucy	*	30	brown	wooden leg	husband, Richmond

Clara	*	50	*	*	*
Kesiah	*	old	black	"walks one-sided similar to a crab"	cousin in Butchertown
Rose	*	*	*	w/1 child	*
no name	*	14	"nearly white"	*	apprehended
Diana	*	*	*	w/ 18 month old child	*
Dolly	*	40	*	w/ little girl - Mary	*
no name	*	22	*	*	*
Sophia	*	*	*	Norfolk Iron Works	*
Rose	*	*	*	Norfolk Iron Works	*
Fanny	*	*	*	Norfolk Iron Works	*
Eady	*	*	*	from Hanover Co.	husband at Mr. Dowells
Winny	*	*	*	from Hanover Co.	husband at Dr. Scott's
Fanny	*	*	8	full round face	sister at Simon Cullins
Sophia	*	*	black	thick, chunky	husband at Brick yard
Jane	*	40	black	*	about John Jackson's
Ann	*	17	bright mulatto	long black hair	friends at Thompkin's
Eliza	*	*	*	from Chesterfield Co.	husband at Mrs. Tazewell's
Mary Dabney	*				
Agnes	*	30	black	*	Shockoe Hill
Pheaby	*	24	black	tall, fine set of teeth	husband at Myer's
Maria	*	18	dark yellow	very sickly	*
Lucy Roan	*	*	*	boarding house cook	*
Ann Elizabeth	*	18	dark	tall	Shockoe Hill
Cary	*	*	*	lived near Poor House	relations on Schokoe Hill

Part 4

Slavery had been and continued to be the dominant feature of Southern life for both blacks and whites during the ante-bellum period.

Table 10 - Ratio of Whites to Slaves in Virginia

1830	1.5
1840	1.9
1850	2.1

The ability of whites to control the activities of Virginia's slaves increased between 1830 and 1860, aided by the population growth of whites and the continuing numbers of blacks being sold out of the state. Whether as jailers, patrollers, overseers or as part of the sales system moving slaves from one place to another, more and more whites were put in charge of proportionately fewer numbers of slaves. In the last census during slavery, taken during the Civil War, 490,865 slaves in Virginia were living among an overwhelming majority of 1,047,299 whites.³¹ The South did not keep up with the more dramatic population increase in the North. In fact, out of the nation's total population the South went from being 44.2 percent in 1830 to 35.3 percent in 1860.³² Population shifts within the South were the most noteworthy occurrence. Men, women, boys, and girls were shifted to the Deep South in such numbers that the slave population there rose by 37 percent during the decade 1850-60, more than 24 percent higher than that of the Upper

³¹ Herbert S Klien, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks: Ivan R. Dee, Inc. 1989), 236.

³² Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery 1619 - 1877* (New York: Hill and Wang 1993), 176.

South. Whites still retained an absolute superiority in numbers, and by force of arms, regimentation, and laws shifted and moved slaves around at will.

The 1830s began with the slave insurrection led by Nat Turner in Southampton County. As slaves who were thought to be part of Turner's plot were being rounded up, the editor of the *Richmond Whig* reported slave men "tortured to death, burned, maimed, and subjected to nameless atrocities. The overseers were called upon to point out any slaves whom they distrusted, and if any tried to escape they were shot down." The heads of some Negroes were impaled on fences to give "warning to all who should undertake a similar plot." The failed insurrection resulted in the revision of all laws intended to "preserve in due subordination the slave population of our state," and by 1832 the legislature had enacted Virginia's "black laws," restrictions that were enforced until the end of the Civil War.³³ Despite the violent public punishments meted out to suspected slaves and free blacks in the aftermath of the Turner insurrection and heightened repression after 1831, advertisements for the sale of slaves, especially when the slaves for sale were part of an offer for land, often carried a tone of solemn paternalism and calm. While no master was likely deliberately to describe his human property as insolent or rebellious, stock phrases such as "likely and healthy," "handy," "first rate," were embellishments commonly used to tempt a buyer, belying any possibility that the slaves offered might be dangerous. One long advertisement for land, home, and numerous outbuildings also contained a detailed description of slaves who came with the property. The eighteen men, women and children at Eight Oaks had been "trained up to do different

³³ John Blair, *The Negro in Virginia*. Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Virginia. (originally published 1940), (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1994), 200-201.

branches of business to great advantage; farming, planting, ditching, shoemaking, spinning, weaving, sewing, house-business, cooking, washing, and ironing, etc.”³⁴

The ad conjures up a pastoral scene of a small bustling village complete with willing and docile laborers. Not a hint appears of any imperfection, although John St. Clair lets one dissonant note creep into the opening line of the ad, where he says that being an old man he has become “quite wearied with the management of land and negroes.”

After Turner’s Rebellion Virginia’s whites could no longer predict the actions or reactions of the slave community with any confidence. Masters came to rely more and more on individuals who made it their business to pursue runaways both locally and out of the state. By the mid-1830s a lawyer in New York City advertised in the Richmond papers that for a fee of \$20 he would return runaway slaves to the south.³⁵

The November 26, 1833 edition of the *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser* ran the following notice, “A great number of slaves in the last six months have run away from their masters in this city, and effected a safe retreat to the north.” The article continued that it is to be assumed that whites were “tampering” with them. Quite inexplicably to the antebellum writer, slaves “most easy in their situation” and “heretofore of the best character” were the first to run. By the writer’s reckoning eleven slaves had disappeared from Richmond since the previous Wednesday, although I was not able to verify that number of slave runaways in the previous week’s newspapers, whether in runaways advertisements or general news items. I do not know if Richmond’s newspaper reporters

³⁴ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) December 19, 1834. note: It is interesting to see the difference between how slave’s skills are described when they are for sale (likely, well trained, able, etc) and those same slaves when they are being discussed as potential free people (improvident, indolent, brutes, lazy, shiftless, etc.).

³⁵ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser* (semi-weekly), July 31, 1835.

had access to the information in the Police Guard Daybook. The larger numbers of runaways are to be found there, high enough numbers to confirm the realistic concern of the master class of Richmond. Fifty-three men and nineteen women ran away and were reported to the Richmond Police in 1834 alone. Reaching the North may have been the public reason the masters often used to account for runaways, but of course, as seen in one advertisement after another, the masters were equally well aware of slaves running to see family in the immediate area.

Seduction and outright theft of slaves was thought to be the goal of those opposed to “good order.” Dulse and her two children were supposed to have been kidnapped, and the advertisement for her return included the names of the white men her owner thought responsible.³⁶ The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 not only put in place more laws to prosecute those who aided runaways in Virginia, it also gave slave owners the right to reclaim their property by permitting legal access to slaves who had successfully made it to the North. The impact that the Fugitive Slave Act had on the dreams of freedom of slave women is best shown in the telegraph published in the *New York Daily Times* for January 28, 1856. The Cincinnati correspondent wrote “A Stampede of slaves from the border counties of Kentucky took place last night. . . . One slave woman, finding escape impossible, cut the throats of her children, killing one instantly, and severely wounding two others. Six of the fugitives were appended, but eight are said to have escaped.”³⁷ That woman was Margaret Garner. Despite months of legal wrangling to keep her in Ohio, the Kentucky warrant obtained under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law was

³⁶ *Richmond Enquirer*, September 30, 1831.

³⁷ Julius Yanuck, “The Garner Fugitive Slave Case,” (*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 1953), 50.

ultimately recognized. Margaret Garner was returned to Kentucky, sold to the deep South, and lost from any record until her resurrection as the character Sethe in Toni Morrison's Beloved over one hundred and twenty-five years later.

The evolving web of Fugitive Slave Laws, the growing population of both whites and blacks, planter migration to the West and South, the growing importance of the inter-regional slave trade, as well as the prices for slaves all played a role in determining the climate of fear and desperation for slaves in their daily lives. The whites who owned them shifted and moved their "property" wherever necessary to bring in the crop.

The crops might change-- tobacco, corn, wheat, livestock-- but increasingly cotton came to dominate the labor of slaves. Cotton dictated the migration patterns not only for white planters and their families but for their slaves as well. Cotton and the slaves needed to raise it increasingly drove the economies of the newly opened lands to the west and into the deep South. Production of cotton escalated from 178,000 bales in 1810 to over 4 million bales just before the Civil War. Cotton was the leading export crop in the United States, bringing in more revenue than all other crops combined.³⁸

For those older states on the Atlantic coast where cotton did not flourish and whose soil was severely depleted by two centuries of tobacco cultivation, slaves became the most important export product. Peter Kolchin estimates that as many as a million slaves were transported from the East, primarily Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas, between 1790 and 1860, with Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas the main destinations. The 1830s and 1850s were high points in slave migration to the west.³⁹

³⁸ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 95.

³⁹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 96.

Masters with their entire households including slaves composed the majority of Virginia migrants in the early 1830s in moves to Kentucky and Tennessee. The figures for the remaining decades of slavery have been a matter of controversy between historians.

Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman contended in 1974 that “about 84 percent of the slaves engaged in the western movement migrated with their owners,”⁴⁰ while more recent research by Michael Tadman emphasizes the acceleration and impact of slave sales in the movement of slaves to the west and deep South. For example, between the years 1828 and 1836 just one slave auction house, that of Isaac Franklin and John Armfield in Alexandria, Virginia, bought and resold over eight thousand slaves.⁴¹ The Three-Chopped Road between Richmond and the Shenandoah Valley and the roads across the Appalachians into Kentucky or South-west into Tennessee were the conduits for the ever-present slave coffles walking in chains out of the state.

In order of volume of slave sales in Virginia the three major markets were located in Alexandria, followed by Richmond, and lastly, Winchester. Investment in both buildings and advertising were well worth the effort. The owners of such establishments stressed a level of order and public propriety completely at odds with the bleak realities of such treatment as examinations of naked slaves, men and women, by prospective buyers. In 1834 Bacon Tait urged prospective customers to inspect his newly constructed slave auction house, which was ideal for Negroes so as to “be well prepared to encounter a

⁴⁰ Robert William Fogel, and Stanley L. Engerman. *Time On the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1974), 48.

⁴¹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 97.

change of climate when removed to the South.” A man could trust Tait’s accommodations to be clean, safe and run in an orderly manner.⁴²

Within a year Bacon Tait was regularly advertising for slaves, “NEGROES WANTED: I wish to purchase 30 Negroes, males and females, from the age of 10 to 25 years. The highest market value will be paid.”⁴³ Again in the same year he emphasized to the slave holding public, “. . . the price of cotton is high, Virginia slaveholders would do well to sell now.”⁴⁴ Sale to the South was incentive for profit for the Virginia slave owner, but once delivered to New Orleans or other points in the Deep South, it was the Virginia origins of slaves that were stressed and often justified a high price. Of the seven professional slave dealers advertising in the New Orleans press in 1850, most characterized the slaves to be sold as having come from Virginia and Maryland.⁴⁵

Bacon Tait was just one of the many who advertised in the Richmond press with business concerning slaves or opportunities to profit from slaves. Auctioneers or hiring agents who received a commission, insurance salesmen who wrote policies on slaves’ lives, particularly those for slaves hired out to industry, all ran advertisements to bring their services to the attention of the public. People who did not necessarily own slaves themselves sought profit in the lucrative trade offering books and magazine articles on slavery, clothing of all types, and manacles. In March of 1860 Drs. Hancock, Peachy and Luckett announced the opening of a slave hospital on Main Street in Richmond. Even the criminal justice system profited from slavery by renting out convict slaves. There is no

⁴² *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) December 30, 1834.

⁴³ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) March 20, 1835.

⁴⁴ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) June 12, 1835.

⁴⁵ Schafer, 34.

way to count the many men who made their living collecting slaves from the country, driving them by wagon or coffle to the slave jails, and in those places feeding and otherwise “maintaining” the property ready for sale.

The high prices for slaves and thus the potential high commissions to the slave traders in the 1850s can be seen in the following figures for a sale held at Amelia Court House;

Forty negroes were sold at an average of \$702 1/2 - the aggregate proceeds being \$28,150:

Man, 70 years, \$85; do[ditto] 60 years, \$105; do 45, \$805; do (curved spine) \$495; do 25, \$1,225; do 22, \$1,150; do 25, \$1,125; do 30, \$1,250; do (blacksmith) 80, \$1,700; do (hernia) 20, \$910; do 20, \$1,360; do 25, \$1,150; boy 17, \$1,285; do 11, \$850; do 10, \$620; do [10?], \$685; old woman 70, \$70; do 50, \$50; woman (diseased) 35, \$505; woman 37, girl 14 and boys 12, 11, 9, 6 and 2, \$4,350; girl 8, \$800; woman 40 and infant, \$685; do and 2 children, 6 and 4, \$1,510; do and 3 children, 6, and 4 and infant, \$1,905; girl 14, \$955; do 12, \$830; do 11, \$660; woman 60, \$505.⁴⁶

At this mid-winter sale, for the men between the ages of seventeen and eighty years old the total selling price was \$11,155, an average of \$1239 per man. Fourteen women and girls were included in the sale. Four of the adult women were sold with their twelve young children, but four young girls (ages 14, 12, 11, and 8 years old) , were sold singly. In the same day's edition of the *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser* there was brief entry “Twenty-one negroes belonging to the Coleman estate were sold at Cumberland C.H., on Friday last, for \$11,117. There were several old ones and some children among them.” Whether these children were with their mothers we will never know. The average price for this “parcel” was \$529. However, once removed to the South the prices for prime field hands rose ever higher;

⁴⁶ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) February 13, 1857.

June 2, 1857

HIGH PRICE OF NEGROES - Six negro men, ranging from thirty to forty years of age, were sold in Lexington, Holmes county, Miss. last Monday, for the average of \$1,618.33 1/2 each . . . This is said to be the highest price ever paid in this county for negroes. The same negroes were sold in 1849 at an average of \$700 each."⁴⁷

The prices of slave property outstripped all other items listed for sale in the newspapers, whether merchandise, buildings, land or wages for whites. To give some perspective on this value, the following items from the same year of the *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser* provide instructive contrasts: a large barn which was a total loss due to fire, was valued at \$1000, while the prices of Valentines ranged from a mere six cents to a lavish \$12. Men of the slave holding class had in their slave property wealth of which the majority of white males could only dream. One slave was valued at eleven times the yearly income a new white recruit could earn if he joined the United States Mounted Service to serve in the West. In the Spring of 1859 one could buy a city lot measuring 29 feet by 110 ft for \$1050 in Richmond.⁴⁸ In 1860 land sold for five dollars an acre in Surry County, land that included "House, kitchen, cabins, barns, stables, springs."⁴⁹ An adult slave was basically equivalent to one city lot or 240 acres of farm land.

With a bit of macabre tallying it is possible to calculate the approximately \$9,000 property loss to the former owners of the eight slaves that successfully escaped with Margaret Garner in the cold January of 1856, as well as the worth of those six, including Garner, that were returned to slavery. She, her husband Simon, and the rest of the family were worth well over \$5,000 to a persistent slave master in Kentucky. On the eve of the

⁴⁷ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) June 2, 1857.

⁴⁸ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) April 15, 1859.

⁴⁹ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) January 10, 1860.

yet to be declared Civil War, the owners of Pulliam and Betts Slave Auction House spelled out in their advertisements the value and profits of the slave trade. “The unceasing demand for negro labor on the plantations of the Southern states, and the subsequent high prices for slaves which have prevailed for a series of years have caused a large increase of the slave trade, in this city - the annual sales, at auction and privately, ranging from three to four million of dollars.”⁵⁰

The lure of profit and the complex web of law and institutional repression including sale that surrounded and ruled the lives of slaves in the United States had been the rule in one form or other in much of the rest of the Western Hemisphere since the late sixteenth-century.⁵¹ All slave societies had problems with fugitives, and among those fugitives were always some numbers of women, whether the serfs of Russia or the slaves of the Caribbean. The same proslavery rhetoric that was common in the American South about the benevolence of a system that supposedly raised the lot of the slave over that of the Northern “wage slave” was echoed by the aristocratic holders of the Russian serfs. While the serfs had some slight recognition as legal entities and were often housed in free standing and largely self-governing villages, it was the prevalent system of the absent owner/landlord that gave them a fragile autonomy the slave did not possess. Except in the cities of the South, American slaves were far more likely to live on the same farm or

⁵⁰ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) September 9, 1859

⁵¹ Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1987), 49. However, by 1850 the “slave South” stood increasingly alone, joined in the Western Hemisphere only by Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela and the Spanish Islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico in still holding slaves. By the ante-bellum period in the United States most of the other slaveholding nations of the New World had begun processes of emancipation of their slave populations. The slaves of Central America, Mexico, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Chile were emancipated over the years 1823-42, those of the British colonies from 1833-38, those in Haiti in 1804, and those of the French and Danish colonies were freed in 1848. After that date Hungary, Russia, the Dutch colonies and Rumania were the only remaining European nations to hold slaves

plantation as the master. In Russia running away, often in substantial groups, was common, and whole villages of serfs were known to have escaped, men, women, children, and elders, together. This collective escape pattern was at variance with the fugitive slave experience in the American South. Eugene Genovese stresses this lack of collective resistance found in American slavery. There individuals, rarely more than two or three together, would run off. The North and complete freedom were not always the goal, geography and motivation might keep a person close to home. Some slaves in the lower South ran to the Indians in the early years of the nineteenth century, but soon that option was closed as whites steadily overran Indian lands in Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. A type of “petit-marronage” existed in isolated, swampy, and otherwise inaccessible places such as The Great Dismal Swamp in Virginia, northern Florida or southern Louisiana. Small groups were sometimes successful at hiding for several years at a time, but nowhere in the American South did maroon societies have any of the cultural impact or longevity they did in Jamaica and Brazil. One ex-slave recalled his one-and-a-half-year stay with a maroon group in Louisiana, of which ten out of the thirty fugitives were women.⁵²

Those women who made a successful escape to a maroon community in Brazil or the Caribbean played an important part as culture bearers and symbols of resistance. Maroons tended to be African-born, while creoles were more likely to escape on their own. Thus, for first- and second-generation born female runaways in places such as Jamaica or Cuba, just as in the American South, resistance took place on a more individual level. Barbara Bush gives no ratio for male to female runaways, but she does assume that tied by bonds of kinship not only to elders but especially to children, Caribbean slave

⁵² Kolchin, *Unfree Labor*, 282-291.

women ran away less often than men and took their children with them more often when they did.⁵³ Garden plots that allowed Caribbean slave women a niche in the marketplace may also have encouraged them to employ other forms of resistance than running.

The majority of enslaved men and women in the American South lived near and worked the fields in deep rural isolation. Some labored as domestics in the houses of the whites who owned the farms and plantations, rotating out into the field in response to the needs of the agricultural seasons. However, more and more slaves were being engaged in industrial work, on the water ways and in the cities. Robert S. Starobin says in his *Industrial Slavery in the Old South*, "In the 1850's, for example (when the black population grew from 3.2 to 4 million persons), between 160,000 and 200,000 bondsmen - or about 5 percent of the total slave population - worked in industry. Most of these industrial slaves were men, but many were women and children."⁵⁴ Hired or sold away from parents, husbands and family, these women and children were housed in barracks or other rented housing. Of these industrial slaves fully four-fifths were held by the owner of the business. The remaining one-fifth were hired laborers for whom advertisements appeared in the newspapers seeking to find owners willing to hire out their slaves and persons and industries interested in hiring. In the 1830s whites paid for advertisements for 102 slaves available for hire. Men were offered as laborers, wagonners, and blacksmiths. Girls and women were offered for house work, factory hands in the tobacco industry, cooks, washers, and child nurses. While some of the women offered for hire, especially as wet nurses, were listed as accompanied by an infant child, most often women offered as

⁵³ Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 64-65.

⁵⁴ Starobin, *Industrial Slavery*, p. 11.

cooks and other types of household servants were specifically listed as being hired “without encumbrance.” It is hardly likely that the majority of such women were truly without children. From the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century experiencing eleven or twelve pregnancies in a lifetime was not unusual even for white women, and for black women the numbers were only slightly lower, most likely the result of poor nutrition and over work.⁵⁵ Those slave women hired out solo may have had no living children, but equally likely they were separated from their children by sale or by the process of hiring mothers away from their home quarters. Wording such as “without encumbrance” might make a prospective employer feel more comfortable but did not necessarily reflect the truth of the situation.

Slaves in the large cities who worked in industry numbered only 15 to 20 percent of the total number of urban slaves.⁵⁶ The rest were domestic slaves or were hired out to hotels, laundries, and other small businesses. For a small but significant number of slaves the cities of the South were work places, living places, religious and social places. There they lived cheek to jowl with free blacks, much to the dismay of the white majority. Even allowing for a probable undercount, slaves were a troublesome segment of the population in the cities of the South from 1820-1860. Slaves caught out in the Richmond streets with forged passes, slaves who could read and write, all were causes of anxiety among whites.⁵⁷ The 2,576 free blacks in Richmond must have developed a complex relationship with the 11,699 slaves resident in that city in 1860, a relationship forged by bonds of kinship as

⁵⁵ Judith Walzer Leavitt, *Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750 to 1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 16-19.

⁵⁶ Starobin, *Industrial Slavery*, 12.

⁵⁷ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, September 7, 1858.

well as race. The urban setting was not only a potential gateway to freedom for rural runaways but an environment where slaves could acquire the knowledge to succeed at escaping. There was more to the underground slave economy than stolen material goods. Possession of even a limited ability to read or write, a smattering of knowledge of the geography of the Chesapeake, or access to a barn or other storage place that could be used for hiding, all were items that could be bargained with.

In Natchez, Louisiana, there were two schools taught by colored teachers. One of these was a slave woman who had taught a midnight school for a year. It was opened at eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and closed at two o'clock a.m. . . . Milla Granson, the teacher, learned to read and write from the children of her indulgent master in her old Kentucky home. Her number of scholars was twelve at a time, and when she had taught these to read and write she dismissed them, and again took her apostolic number and brought them up to the extent of her ability, until she had graduated hundreds. A number of them wrote their own passes and started for Canada.⁵⁸

The growing and vigorous market in cotton, land, and slaves during the decade of the 1830s seems to have taken the edge off any anxiety over further insurrection after Nat Turner, at least for the time being. But by the 1850s new stresses both agricultural and social were being felt. Slaveholders owned the vast majority of agricultural wealth, with an average personal wealth fourteen times that of nonslaveholders.⁵⁹ The gap was widening between the wealth of the slaveholders and the declining opportunities for white laborers. Slaves felt the impact of the resentments. The brutality of the poor white men hired as patrollers was clear evidence of the general hostility of whites who had little hope of owning either land or slaves. James Oakes says "In 1860 perhaps a third of all southern

⁵⁸ Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (Vintage: Random House, 1983), 251. Note 58 - Lerner, op. cit, 32-33 - Quoted from Laura S. Haviland, *A Woman's Life-Work, Labors and Experiences* (Chicago: Publishing Association of Friends, 1889), 300-301.

⁵⁹ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, pp. 180-181.

whites owned little more than the clothing they wore, while fewer than four percent of the adult white males owned the majority of black slaves.” These were the planters and farmers who owned twenty slaves or more. The men who owned five slaves or less were a fluctuating class and achieving and maintaining that status was difficult at best.⁶⁰ If they could not own or hire slaves, men with ambition to move in the world of the slaveholder could still act as patrollers, or jailers or auctioneers.

At the same time the owners of the land and slaves were pressured by Northern financial markets to produce more as the nation developed inter-regional markets and access to railroads began to be essential to successful agriculture. Understandings about soil erosion, soil fertility and general methods of “scientific” agriculture underwent a transition from 1830 through the 1850s. Lawrence William McKee in his *Plantation Food Supply in Nineteenth-century Tidewater Virginia* described the growing agricultural crisis in the ante-bellum South. In the 1830s soil depletion in the Tidewater led to the exodus of those farmers unable or unwilling to take on the complex task of improving the land by the recently introduced concepts of “simple methods of contour and deep plowing, manuring, field rotation and fallowing” and the restoration of “soil fertility using marl and guano.” Important to the successful farmer in this period was an individual planter’s “acknowledgment of a need to develop market and transportation systems, and to become aware and involved in the national systems of commerce.”⁶¹ One expert on soil erosion in the Chesapeake considered the 1840s to be the decade in which Virginia’s planters made

⁶⁰ James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (Vintage:Random House, 1983), 38-40.

⁶¹ Lawrence William McKee, *Plantation Food Supply in Nineteenth-century Tidewater Virginia* (Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1988), 58-59.

their greatest advances in the scientific agricultural movement. In that decade men like Edmund Ruffin of Prince George County and other eastern counties were able to demonstrate remarkable agricultural successes. Lawrence McKee concludes that “It is difficult to interpret the effects of the agricultural revival on the lives of the Tidewater slaves. Directly affected by their master’s success, they were at least spared the trauma and disruption of mass emigration or sale to the new lands of the lower South.”⁶² That may have been true for the slaves of successful masters, but far more masters were never part of the scientific agriculture movement and their slaves suffered when a master had a reversal of fortunes. Thus the 1840s can be seen as a brief hiatus in the rapid movement to the South begun in the 1830s by masters with their slaves in tow, opening up new soil, particularly for cotton. Among other issues the continuing decline in soil productivity in Virginia and the growing anti-slavery controversy caused attitudes to harden and repression to become more severe.

August 23, 1853

We learn that there have been, recently, some indication of insubordination among slaves in that part of Nottoway, near Jennings' Ordinary. A day or two since, Capt. N. Ward's overseer was so severely beaten by one of his slaves, that his life is considered in danger. The slave afterwards absconded. Measures were taken at once to preserve proper discipline and order. Illicit trafficking and the liquor obtained in that way, is at the bottom of nearly every exhibition of turbulence among slaves in the State- who are, indeed, the best fed and best clad farm laborers to be found anywhere.⁶³

The man who beat Captain Ward’s overseer and then ran away faced sale if apprehended. Sale to the western reaches of Virginia, and more frightening, into the deep South was the worst of the threats to which ante-bellum slaves reacted by running.

⁶² McKee, *Plantation Food Supply*, p. 59

⁶³ *Richmond Semi-Weekly Examiner*, August 23, 1853.

During the colonial period slaves had been sold, but rarely far from their homes.⁶⁴ The vast wave of involuntary migration forced on the slave population during the nineteenth century wrested hundreds of thousands of individuals far away from family into lands so distant as to preclude any ability to remain in touch with kin. Running away was increasingly full of danger, but slaves also had to fear being moved as part of the white pattern of migration to the new lands in the West and the deep South.

The details of family breakup and emotional turmoil can only be imagined, but the figures give some idea of the likelihood of such an occurrence happening in the life of any individual slave. During the last thirty years of the antebellum period young men and young women were increasingly likely to be removed to the Deep South as the financial incentives to produce cotton drove the slave trade in the Upper South. In Virginia, from 1850 to 1860, a slave woman 15-19 years of age could easily get caught up in the 17.7 percent of slave girls exported out of the state during that decade. For women in the 20 to 29 age bracket the chances were much higher. During that same period, 21.8 percent of that older age group were sold out of state.⁶⁵ Any advance warning of such an impending crisis would cause a woman seriously to assess her options either to run for the North or at least to visit relatives for a last farewell.

Frederic Bancroft, in his 1931 book, *Slave Trading in the Old South*, quotes Howison's 1847 history of Virginia on the movement of slaves; "Hardly a day passes in which large companies [of slaves] may not be seen traversing the roads of Virginia on their way to the southern frontier."⁶⁶ Bancroft interpreted those sales as the result of an

⁶⁴ Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 96.

⁶⁵ Tadman, *Speculators*, 302

⁶⁶ Bancroft, Frederic. *Slave-Trading in the Old South* (J. H. Furst Company, 1931), 91.

indulgent and improvident planter class unable or unwilling to live within their means. The threat of being “put in the master’s pocket” or “sold to the South” could be used to intimidate a slave out of rebellion, but the real danger lay in the economic realities of the planter life style. He contended that a Virginia “country gentleman was unable to keep his family in comfort and feed and clothe his negroes decently without ultimately selling some of them or running deeply in debt.” Making every attempt to save face and keep such financial maneuvering hidden from public knowledge, slave owners made “secret sales or further loans with deeds of trust on [their] best negroes - or mortgages with power of sale, or possession of the slaves as collateral and a bill of sale, to be void if the debt was paid by a certain time. . . . It was almost proverbial that Virginia ‘planters were not used to paying their debts until they died,’ they were ‘the poor, rich Virginians,’ who fancied they were impoverished by their negroes!”⁶⁷ It was outright sale, removal, and repurchase that accounted for 60 to 70 percent of inter-regional slave movements.⁶⁸

Indeed, the cumulative sales in Richmond Virginia in the 1850s, as documented by the advertisements in the newspapers, reveal 4,623 slaves for sale in that city alone, sales calculated by one slave dealer in 1859 as “at auction and privately, ranging from three to four million of dollars.”⁶⁹ Fine points in the ongoing debate over planters’ economic need to sell or over slave sales as purely turnover of a profitable commodity made a difference to an individual slave insofar as such economic realities might boost the market for labor or accelerate foreclosure of a master’s debt. At such points slaves were most vulnerable to sale. Of the thirty-six women I found in the newspapers, over half had been sold within

⁶⁷ Bancroft, *Slave Trading*, 89.

⁶⁸ Tadman, *Speculators*, 44.

⁶⁹ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) September 9, 1859

a recent enough time for their masters to note the sale in the advertisements for their return, a considerably higher figure than Parker's 32 percent of runaways, men and women, who had been sold at least once.

Settling estates continued to be a major cause of slave sales in both decades, thus any natural feelings of sorrow at the death of a long-familiar and perhaps well-regarded master or mistress were compromised by the fears of sale. Deaths, be they from yellow fever, malignant sore throat, tuberculosis, or any of the many other incurable infections of the time, were all individual tragedies to the white families involved, but for the slaves they might have owned confusion in the white family or a break in the daily routine of household or farm could encourage a person to take advantage of a window of opportunity for escape. Black field foremen, artisans, hired labor, and women in the house could be in a position to walk away unnoticed if they read the signs right. A white family caught up in grief or a particularly infectious disease might not have the ability to maintain surveillance over slaves with the usual rigor. And given the numbers of runaways under normal circumstances, unsettled times must have seemed opportune to slaves who were looking to escape.

The Richmond newspapers listed 7,048 slaves for sale during the decades of the 1830s and 1850s. Over half were offered in advertisements that listed the cause for the sale. Newspaper sales were divided between those demanded by the court, such as court sales at probate, and those of a more voluntarily nature, at auction or by deed of trust. In the 1830s sales under the direction of the courts affected two and a half times as many slaves as were offered up for debt or auction. By the 1850s deed of trust, payment of

debt, need for cash, and auction outstripped the number of slaves sold by court-directed sales by one and a half times. As auction became the most common method of selling slaves, owners in need of ready cash became more reticent to declare that reason for the sale of their slaves. The ability to sell slaves anonymously, via the auction houses, reduced public knowledge of a man's financial affairs.

Table 11 - Categories for Slave Sales in Richmond Newspapers

	1830 - 40	1850 - 60
Auction	195	1667
Payment of Debt	22	25
Deed of Trust	245	460
Need of Cash	20	2
total	482	2154
Estate sale or division	867	640
Administrator's Sale	7	617
Probate Court	25	35
Executor's Sale	85	30
total	1116	1432

The newspapers give chilling evidence of the immediate consequences when debt in the white family disrupted the slave community. In 1830 an anonymous group of "100 men, women, boys and girls" were advertised as part of an estate sale, while a deed of trust sale in which the names of the slaves and their kinship relationships are clear read "21 men, women, boys and girls - Jack, Ben, Robert, Toney, Frank, William, James, Isaac, Hannah, Betsy and her two children, Lucy and her two children, Peter and Rosanna, Polly, Vanna, and Henry, a small boy."⁷⁰ The 1850s were no different, "1 woman, 26 or 27 yrs., superior ladies maid or seamstress, her three children, 4 young men, all one family, owner

⁷⁰ *Richmond Enquirer*, 1830.

must sell.”⁷¹ Mother and children, brothers and uncles, nieces and nephews: a family destroyed.

The tradition of sales and hiring out just after Christmas or the New Year during the slack period between crops meant that slaves could perhaps anticipate some bit of free time during the holidays, time to plan an escape or make the break for freedom. Sometimes in small groups, but often in very large ones, such sales were ubiquitous in every year’s newspapers as fall turned to winter; “40-50 men, women, boys and girls, young and likely, to be sold December 30, 1830 in an estate sale;” “100 men, women, boys and girls, to be sold January 6, 1831;” “January 1, 1836, 7 men, women, boys, and girls, blacksmith, female cook and washer and house servant, 4 likely boys, 1 likely girl, Raleigh Tavern, administrator’s sale;” “2 women with 4 children each, auction, December 29, 1858;” “38 men, women, boys and girls, sale to be held January 7, 1861.”⁷²

For the owner who possessed more slaves than needed in a particular agricultural or industrial enterprise or who lived in town, hiring out was a way to make profits on their slaves without having daily maintenance costs. Hiring out was dependably profitable. One study found that “from 1830 to 1860, the annual rates of return from slave hiring ranged from . . . 9.5 to 14.3 percent in the upper South, and from 10.3 to 18.5 percent in the lower South.”⁷³ And of course the agents got a profitable commission for each hire successfully contracted. How those rates played out in the marketplace can be seen in the following article;

January 13, 1860

⁷¹ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) 1856.

⁷² *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) 1830, 1831, 1836, 1858, 1861.

⁷³ Starobin, *Industrial Slavery*, 153. The study quoted was R. Evans, Jr., “The Economics of American Negro Slavery,” *Aspects of Labor Economics* (Princeton, 1962), 217.

High Prices for Hirelings - Messrs. Cook & Close, Agents of this city, have, during this season, hired boys from 12-14 yrs of age at \$120; girls 10-14 yrs, from \$20 to \$45; nurses and house servants from \$45 to \$75; cooks from \$85 to \$100; ordinary man from \$160 to \$180 per annum. This is unmistakable evidence that the Harper's Ferry riot has not diminished the demand for slave labor in the Old Dominion.⁷⁴

Being sold or hired out were certainly major fears that both men and women faced everyday and often reacted to by running away, but wherever the slave was quartered, on a day to day basis a slave owner could and did interfere at the most intimate levels of a slave's life. Permission to marry (or more accurately, to live as married) had to be granted by the master, which in the case of slaves living on different plantations meant obtaining permission from two owners. Since any resulting children would then belong to the owner of the woman, the negotiations to obtain permission for an "away marriage" could be difficult. Once the marriage was allowed, permission to live with, or see one's spouse on some regular basis could be severely restricted. Most likely the husband had to petition his master on a regular basis for a pass that would allow him to travel the roads on a Saturday or Sunday to visit his wife. For women the "away" marriage could be bitterly unrewarding as the following example illustrates. "Angelina Grimke, the prominent women's leader and abolitionist who was raised in a slave holder's family relates that the house servants and chambermaids had to sleep in their mistresses' apartments away from their own families. She said, 'I know of an instance of a woman who had been married eleven years and yet has never been allowed to sleep out of her mistress's chambers.'"⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) January 13, 1860

⁷⁵ Darlene Clark Hine, ed. *Black Women in American History From Colonial Times Through the Nineteenth Century* (Vol. 1, Carlson Publishing, 1990), 369.

At least three slave woman listed in the newspapers were sold away from their husbands. They reacted by absconding⁷⁶.

Slave owners had few compunctions about treating slaves as one might treat farm animals. Whipping, the treadmill, and chaining were common forms of punishment. A particularly dreadful possibility for Virginia's slave women would have been the grapevine rumor of the use of slave women in medical experimentation, a rumor especially relevant for women who had difficult labors and deliveries and thus came to the attention of white doctors. Rumors of medical brutalities would have been amplified and confirmed by the common knowledge of the use of corpses of blacks and indigent whites by medical schools in Richmond and Petersburg. The cadavers were obtained by hiring grave-robbers to raid the local cemeteries of the black community, both free and slave. Any slave woman in Central Virginia would have had some chance of being made part of an experiment. Throughout the late 1830s, the 1840s, and up to the mid-1850s, at least two doctors, one in Alabama and one in Prince Edward County, Virginia, performed experiments on slave women in order to perfect a surgical method of correcting vesico-vaginal fistula. These two men, John Peter Mettauer and J. Marion Sims, bought and then used the living bodies of no less than twenty-seven slave women in whom they first induced the condition, then treated it with surgery.⁷⁷

“Vesico-vaginal and rectovaginal fistulas [were] (holes between the vagina and either the bladder or the rectum caused by the violence of childbirth or instrument

⁷⁶ *Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, December 19, 1834; *Daily Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, July 25, 1833, October 23, 1833.

⁷⁷ Todd L Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (University of Illinois Press, 1978), 293, 297.

damage) . . . [these fistulas] led to either urine or feces constantly leaking through the vaginal opening without the possibility of control . . . Women who had to live with this condition sat alone and invalidated as long as they lived unless they were one of the beneficiaries of Dr. J. Marion Sims' repair operation after the middle of the century."⁷⁸ So writes one historian of childbirth in America. Out of Sims' research came the surgical technique for the repair of such fistulas and the perfection of the speculum - two medical advances bought for some women with incalculable pain suffered by others.

Fear of being treated by any white physician would have encouraged reliance on black healers and midwives in the slave community. Because African American slave healers were largely ignored or deprecated as ignorant and heathenish, it is no wonder that women who acted as midwives were little noted. Whites gave black granny midwives little attention, and the black men who escaped to tell their own life tales in the North rarely mentioned them either.

Largely unremarked upon, the granny midwife, who had access to women of the quarter and perhaps wider latitude to travel to other farms and plantations to aid black women in birthing, was a good source of rumor, gossip, and news from relatives. The midwife would know herbs and roots for infertility for barren women who, especially if they were not strong workers, would likely be sold. In contrast, reactions to the pressures for regular childbearing may have prompted women to seek the aid of elder black women still knowledgeable in the herbal methods of abortion and contraception. These techniques, passed from black midwife to black midwife, were always rumored about among whites, but were kept secret from the eyes of the master. Barbara Bush says,

⁷⁸ Leavitt, *Brought to Bed*, 28-29.

“Since such practices have by necessity been clandestine, little documentary evidence exists. Abortion belongs to a shadowy world outside the mainstream of history. Absence of documentation, therefore, cannot be used to refute the existence of such practices . . . Women slaves had particularly strong motives for limiting the number of children they had.”⁷⁹ The close to sacred tradition of black women’s love of their children that permeates the historiography of slavery almost precludes any meaningful discussion of the role abortion played in the slave community, although the infanticide of living infants has been documented in cases other than that of Margaret Garner. In the Richmond newspaper advertisements, the eleven living children and the four in utero, denied the master by their runaway mothers, are evidence of the willingness of these women to risk all to find some form of freedom for their children, if only the freedom of being with their mothers.

Despite knowing the possible penalties women ran away. Being caught after running away could bring not merely incarceration and whipping but commitment to the Public Hospital. Rose, a forty-three-year-old servant living in Williamsburg, ran away after her owners refused to allow her to see the man she wished to marry. When found she lapsed “into hysterical convulsions. Her owner felt that a straight-jacket was necessary to control Rose during her fits.”⁸⁰

Going insane was not the only extreme emotional reaction recorded in the institutional archives. The notices of the Hustings court and magistrate’s courts printed in

⁷⁹ Barbara Bush, “The Family Tree is Not Cut’: Women and Cultural Resistance in Slave Family Life in the British Caribbean,” *In Resistance: Studies in African, Caribbean, and Afro-American History*, Gary Y. Okihiro, ed., (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 126-127.

⁸⁰ Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery*, p.250.

the Richmond papers give evidence of slave women driven to acts of insubordination or violence. Close to Christmas in 1856 at the Mayor's court, "Sophronia, a slave of Mrs. Burton, was arraigned for using violence towards a little son of Mr. James Dunlop."⁸¹ Three news reports concerned white women who had been assaulted and murdered by slave women.⁸² Other slave women who caught themselves on the brink of such rash deeds may have run away rather than acting.

Retribution for the act of murder was swift, and few slave women made such a serious choice. However, the lives of slave women were full of daily insults, constant fear for their families, and the ever-present turn of the dice that meant sale and separation. Given all the motivations, running away might have seemed the best and only solution, even if temporary. Maybe running away was seen by some as a sort of bargaining chip in the constant negotiations between slave and master. If the bonds of marriage and motherhood had already been broken by sale or hiring out, especially within the city of Richmond, the high number of female runaways reflect, for these women, a running that did not involve *leaving* immediate family, but rather running *back* to children and husbands.

⁸¹ *Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, (semi-weekly,) December 2, 1856.

⁸² *Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser*, July 30, 1852, July 23, 1858, November 9, 1860.

CONCLUSION

I am not alone in finding a more than minor number of women in the population of fugitive slaves, for historians Wood, Parker, Genovese, Gutman, and Tadman use figures that approach mine. Schafer even tops my percentages. Unlike them, however, in this thesis I examine the action of running away as a personal statement by slave women. Slave women did not run away for no reason, nor simply for the same reasons as men. They ran away for their own reasons and in doing so had an impact on their culture, their families, and the whites who held them in bondage. After Emancipation their exploits and motivation must have been an inspiration and a living example to newly freed slaves.

The women in this study labored as agricultural workers, industrial workers, and household slaves in the Central Virginia area, mainly near Richmond. Many were mothers, and over half had been separated from their husbands by either sale or hiring away. With a spouse and other relatives as their destination, the majority of women left their owners and were advertised for after an average of two weeks' absence. Their owners revealed the tensions of sexual attraction white men could have for slave women in the words they chose to describe the fugitives, and in the testimony of the one woman who escaped to the North we learn of the pain and loss caused by sexual vulnerability.

The women in this study lived in a context of legal slavery supported by long standing customs and traditions that spelled out and mediated the relationships between whites and blacks. The newspapers of Richmond filled in many of the details with news of the courts, the happenings in other parts of the South, political reactions to the

Abolitionist movement, and the growing issue of State's Rights. Whites reacted with fear and repression after Nat Turner's Rebellion, and increasing pressure was brought to bear to pass laws to restrict the movements of slaves and to punish any white who aided blacks to escape. The newspapers also made very clear how profitable the slave trade was and the extent to which Virginia's slaves were targeted for the Deep South and the cotton field.

Slavery in the United States shared many features with the bondage practiced in other countries of the New World, as well as in Russian serfdom. Where America differed was largely in the demographics of population and the lack of possibilities for successful or long term escape by slaves. Whites outnumbered slaves in most regions of the South, and even in the few places where slaves outnumbered whites, in the event of insurrection, slave owners possessed guns and could trust in help from other slave owners, non-slaveholding whites, and whites in surrounding counties or states to put down any uprising.

In the cities of the South slaves worked in industry, as artisans, and as house slaves. Out in the country slaves were owned by and hired to coal mines, the iron industry and to the railroads. Industrial development and the pressure of markets in the North pushed the growth of plantation agriculture and its movement into new land farther west. With the plantation owners went slaves in the hundreds of thousands. The peripatetic movement of whites helped create a climate in which sale and separation were at the same time an ever-present possibility and powerful inducement to run away.

Slave women who lived in this world chose to run away in reaction to many forces, including sale, punishment, disruption of their marriages, and separation from their children and extended family. They also ran away to live as free in the cities and for some women, to get to freedom in the North. Many slave women appeared to use the act of “laying out” as a means of momentary relief from the demands of work or the opportunity to visit kin, with the intention of eventual return. The practice of not placing an ad for a runaway until weeks or even months had passed confirms the fact that slave owners were aware of this habit. Again it is important not to judge laying-out as a minor infraction just because the master was aware of the phenomenon and may have gauged his decision to advertise in the newspaper on how long a woman was gone. The law was behind the master, and at any instant he could decide to up the ante by searching for a runaway with mounted patrollers and dogs. Giving an owner the knowledge, by the act of running, that he or she harbored a dissatisfied “servant” in the house or shop undoubtedly made for closer scrutiny and even less autonomy than might be finagled by a seemingly “contented” slave. Each woman had to weigh the costs carefully. Being willing to take the punishment does not diminish the brutality of the whipping.

It has been suggested by Gad Heuman that laying out runaways “were less concerned about freedom than with preserving some sort of autonomy within slavery itself, which raises the question of the degree to which slaves could control and affect aspects of the masters’ world.”⁸³ I would argue that while it may be true that individual slave women sought some immediate autonomy within the boundaries of bondage, that search was always connected to the larger issue of freedom. Recognizing and then acting

⁸³ Heuman, 1986, cited in Bush, *Slave Women*, p. 64.

on the urge to run, making a personal decision, whether to the North or the next plantation, constituted a specific statement about the value and meaning of freedom to a slave.

Page after page of the newspapers of the antebellum South reveal how much the slave, individually and collectively, preoccupied the thoughts of slave owner, the business owner who sought to invest in the lucrative slave trade, the politician, the clergy, and the general public. Fears of anticipated insurrection, vehement reactions to the Northern press, even the most mundane items about slaves competed on the pages for the attention of the Southern reader, including advertisements for runaway slaves.

Running away was not the inevitable or the most common choice of slave women. Having family in the quarters appears to have been a legitimate reason that could hold a woman back from running away. Reading the narratives of ex-slaves I do not get the impression that there was any community censure for staying. Staying or running, all were slaves, all had to make their own decisions. Those who stayed often eased the way and protected those who ran. What the slave community felt about those of their members who personally challenged the laws of slavery can be read in the words of praise in the ex-slave narratives, praise for fathers and mothers who braved punishment to protect their children from overseers or masters and praise for those men and women who ran away. Blacks who remained in bondage probably spoke very circumspectly about local runaways. After all, those slaves who were known to have escaped all the way to freedom could be safely talked about, while those who still hid in the barns and woods near a quarter or in the Shokoe Bottom area of Richmond were not the proper stuff of gossip.

The consequences could be severe enough that only the fugitive had the right to make herself known.

The black women who tilled their masters' fields, washed the clothes, tended the white families' most intimate needs, cared for the white children, and fed white families, showed their dissatisfactions by talking back, physical assault, murder, and mainly by running away. In doing so they carried on a tradition known to slave women in all the slave societies in the Americas. By example they taught their children the rules for helping fugitives and those for being a fugitive; keeping one's mouth shut around whites, being prepared to share food with fugitive slaves, and watching for the best chance to run. Most of all by the repeated example of women running to find their husbands, their own parents and other kin and their children, the women who ran away proved the depth of love for family that was the cornerstone of the slave community.

APPENDIX A

Advertisements for Runway Female Slaves

1830-1839

Constitutional Whig

February 25, 1831

Broke jail, about the 28th December, 1830, a Negro Woman by the name HANNAH. She says she belongs to Gabriel Parks of Monroe county. Said Hannah is a large, black, young wench, about 26 yrs of age, middling thick lips, and as near as I recollect, a small scar on her left wrist. When she went away, had on a white home-spun frock, and carried with her a calico, and one other frock not recollected. Any person taking up said Negro Woman and lodging her in a jail, so that I can get her, shall be handsomely rewarded, and all reasonable expenses paid.

Eliphalet Hale, Jailer
Warren County, Geo.

Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser semi-weekly

December 19, 1834

TEN DOLLARS reward, for the apprehension of a Negro woman named MARY, who was purchased by Mr. John Wilson of Burwell Basset - the woman Mary was raised on Mr. Basset's plantation on York River, near the Brick House; her husband was sold to Mr. Edward Watkins of New Kent county, and it is probable she may be somewhere in his neighborhood. Mary has a dark brown complexion, a short chin, and of slender make, she has lost some of her upper front teeth, and those remaining project out very much - she is about 28 or 30 yr. old.

BACON TAIT

December 23, 1834

Ran away from the subscriber, on Thursday evening, 18th instant, his negro woman, FANNY, about 5 feet 2 inches high, about 37 or 38 years old. All persona and particularly masters of vessels are cautioned not to harbor or carry away said negro. She is well known here, and acquainted in Norfolk & Portsmouth.

Richmond, Dec 19

William H. Taylor

The Norfolk and Portsmouth papers will please to give the above three insertions, and forward their account for payment to this office.

December 22, 1835

Runaway - My woman DOLLY, ran away on Saturday last. If taken in this city and restored to me, I will give ten dollars for her apprehension. If taken out of the city, I will give twenty dollars reward. She is about five feet ten inches high, dark brown complexion, about 20 years old, and unusually likely in face and person. She speaks quick when asked a question. She came from Mr. Wingfield's in Hanover.

Abner V. England

January 24, 1837

Twenty Dollars Reward - Ran away from the subscriber on the 30th October, my negro woman LUCINDA. Lucinda is about forty years of age, five foot high, small and very active. Its not known what clothing she took, as she has several suits. It is supposed she has free papers. The above reward will be given for her apprehension if brought to me or secured in jail so that I get her again.

Ann H. Thornton

Ormesly, near Villbro', Caroline county, Nov. 4

Richmond Enquirer

November 2, 1830

\$100 Reward - Ranaway or was stolen from this place, on Tuesday, the 23rd of February last, ELIZA, a bright mulatto girl, about sixteen years old, well grown and very likely. Her hair grows low down on her forehead, and full around her temples. Eliza has lived in Richmond for several years, and lived the last year with Mr. Evans near the Bank of the United States. In her dress she is generally fashionable and fine. It is believed that this girl has been seduced away by some white men, and may travel with them as a free person, or as their slave. I will give the above for her apprehension and delivery to me if taken out of the State, or fifty dollars if taken within the State of Virginia.

Wm. H.G. Lumpkin

January 8, 1831

\$150 Dollars Reward - Runaway, in the month of May last, a Negro Woman, named MARY, She is inclined to the mulatto, tolerably long hair, a good Cook and House Servant. She was purchased by Charles L. Wingfield, Esq., then of Williamsburg - now of Norfolk, in the latter place, sometime last winter, and made her escape near Williamsburg, as Mr. W. was sending her to the Steamboat, to be delivered to my agent. I will give the above the reward if delivered to me in Jefferson, Jackson County, Georgia; \$50 if secured in any jail so that I shall get her, or \$150 for the chance of her. All persons are forewarned from harboring her at their peril. Letters addressed to me at the above place, will receive immediate attention.

Jan 6

Wm. D. Martin

March 26, 1831

One Hundred or Fifty Dollars Reward - Ranaway from the subscriber about Christmas, 1828, a dark complected woman, named JINNY, aged about 23 years, of common height and size. It is thought that she has had one or two children since she absconded; and supposed to pass as a free person, and probably under the disguise of men's apparel. Caution is hereby given to any person who may be disposed to harbor or protect her, contrary to the laws of this State. She was sold in this City, by Turner H. Royal of Charles City County; and it is presumed she must be either in said county, or in the neighborhood of Robert Baily of New Kent County, as she has relations at Mrs. Baily's. I am disposed to sell her, or exchange her for any other slave that might be for trade. Any person who may be disposed to trade for her, and to bear the risk of recovering her, is respectfully requested to communicate the proposition to me at Richmond, which will be attended to, and for her delivery to me in this City, I will pay a reward of \$100 or \$50, if secured in any jail so that I got her. A discontinuation of this advertisement, need not to be considered as evidence of her delivery to me.

Lewis A. Collier

May 17, 1831

Five Dollars Reward - Ranaway on Tuesday last, a negro girl named VINEY, about sixteen years of age; stutters, particularly when spoken to - dark complexion, wide mouth, thick lips, with a scar on her forehead, her big toes are much longer than the rest. She had on when she went off a homespun dress, striped in the filling, also a pair of high quartered shoes; but no doubt will change her clothes, and at this time, as I believe, lurking about Richmond, as she has some relations in that place, and is acquainted about the new market. I forewarn all Captains of vessels, or waggoners, from carrying her off, under the penalty of the law, as she may try to make her way to some free State. I will pay the above reward to any person that will deliver the said girl to me. in Henrico county or secure her in jail so that I get her again.

Thomas Tyler

Daily Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser

July 11, 1833

Five Dollars Reward - Left my house on Friday, the 7th inst., a tall old black woman, named JUDY. She may be shulking [sic] in Richmond or its vicinity. She has relations in Fredericksburg, where she may have endeavored to get. The above reward will be paid if she is secured so that I get her.

Charles Johnston

July 17, 1833

\$50 Dollar Reward - The above reward will be given for the apprehension of two negro women, (and a little girl, the daughter of one of them,) who made their escape yesterday evening from the subscriber. SARAH, a mulatto, about 23 or 24 yrs of age, who is now pregnant, her face is somewhat freckled, her hair bushy, and less curly then common with colored persons. Her child is a mulatto about 7 or 8 years of age. ARIANNA is a tall spare woman (also mulatto) about 19 or 20 years old, her hair bushy, nose large and flat, and her feet are unusually small. I will pay \$25 for the woman and child and \$25 for Arianna, upon their delivery to me, or to Mr. D. Trueheart, in my absence - or if taken out of the county for securing them in the jail of the county in which they are taken. Masters of vessels are cautioned against receiving the above slaves on board their vessels, for they will no doubt attempt to make their escape to the north.

W. Mosby, Jr.

Executor of Mary H. Mosby, dec'd

July 25, 1833

\$10 Dollar Reward - Ran away from the subscriber on Tuesday the 23rd instant, a Negro Woman, LYDIA, with a young child. The Woman is about twenty-three years of age, small, with a bushy head, speaks short when spoken to. The Child is about 8 months old. I bought her a short time since, of Mr. Sanxy, her husband lives at Mr. Diddep's; and there is no doubt but she is concealed about the city somewhere; the above reward will be given for her apprehension and delivery to me, living on Skokoe Hill, near the Hill Tavern.

Grover M. Young

October 23, 1833

\$100 Reward - The above reward will be given for the apprehension and delivery to me, of a Negro Woman named MILLY, who absconded during my absence, about the 10th of September. Milly is a dark mulatto, between 26 and 30 years of age. I bought her of Mr. White of Henrico, and she has a husband belonging to Gen. Harvie, working on the Island, where it is likely she is.

J.H. Eustace

November 26, 1833

Fifty Dollars Reward - Absconded from my service last Saturday, about five o'clock after noon, my two household women servants - LIZZIE, about forty years old, stout, well formed - but without any distinguishing mark - and MARIA, a year younger, lower, but apparently older than the other, with a scar or mark on her neck left by a recent rising. Lizzie took off her child Edward, six years old, small but intelligent for his age, and having a speck or star in one eye, believed to be the right. They took all their own clothes, bedding and bed clothes - but nothing else. As no fault was charged to them, circumstances induce me to think, that they have been instigated to go off and directed in their course by white persons.

I will give thirty dollars to have Lizzie and her child restored to me, and twenty dollars for Maria, besides having all expenses of their conveyance to Richmond, if taken beyond its limits. For such information as will lead to the detection and conviction of any white persons concerned with carrying them without the corporation, I will upon his or their conviction give an additional reward of fifty dollars.

John Forbes

November 29, 1833

\$20 Dollars Reward - Ran away from the subscriber, a negro woman, who calls herself RACHAEL, about thirty years old, and about five feet four inches high. She is of a brownish complexion, and has a mark on the right side of her neck from being cupped. The above reward will be given to anyone who will return her to the subscriber, or secure her in any jail.

She has also taken with her a quantity of men's clothing, which she stole from me.

Abraham Levy

Groups and Families including Women

Daily Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser

July 29, 1833

Runaways - On Saturday night, the 9th inst., ran away from the city of Richmond, four Negroes, two Men and two Women. It is not know whether they went by land or water. There is no doubt but they had free papers, all forged. A handsome reward will be paid for any information respecting the above Slaves, on application to the subscriber, at the Merchant's Coffee House, Richmond, Virginia.

Jas. H. Lynch

Richmond Enquirer

February 26, 1831

\$100 Reward - Ranaway from the subscribers, residing in the county of Buckingham, a negro man. Manser, and his wife, MALINDA. Manser is about the ordinary size, between 25 and 30 years of age, complexion rather yellow; he has a large scar on his breast, occasioned from a burn when small; he is a harmless, inoffensive negro. Malinda is about the same age as the man, of ordinary size, has a very uncommon bushy head of hair, rather of Indian complexion, with some dark freckles in her face: she is a very intelligent woman and was principally raised on Kanawha, near the Salt Works; she is well acquainted in the counties of Bedford and Giles; she was the property of Joseph Evans, who owned said woman for two years, and lived in the county of Giles; Evans purchased her of Brown & Claytor, Lynchburg. We will give a reward of \$50 each, if taken out of the State, so that we get them again, or \$20 each if taken in the State, and secured in jail, so that we get them.

Powhattan Jones,
Anderson D. Abrahams

September 23, 1831

Absconded from the subscriber about the first of January last, two negroes, belonging to the estate of Frances Goode, dec'd., late of this county, Joe, or Joe Lucas, and his sister TENER. Joe is believed to be about 50 years of age, is a stout black man, about six feet high, his head and whiskers gray, and has a somewhat feminine voice. He is a tolerably good coarse shoemaker, and carried with him his tools - having run away before, and then was taken employed in a boat on James river, he is probably thus engaged at this time. Tener is upwards of 50 years of age, is about five feet six inches high, black, and nothing remarkable that is recollected about her. She has near connections in the neighborhood of Michaux' Ferry, in this county, and is probably harbored by some of them. A reasonable reward will be paid for the delivery of these negroes to the subscriber, or for their apprehension and deposit in some jail where I can get them.

B.S. Morrison
Adm'r of F. Goode, dec'd
Powhatan, Sept. 16, 1831

The Richmond Jeffersonian

Tuesday, November 5, 1833

Runaway or stolen, from Winnsboro, South Carolina. 28th May 1831 in the then possession Wm. Brearly, a family of NEGROES, of the following description, viz:

A negro man named CATO, raised by Wm. Wilson of Sumter District, aged about 28 years, 5 feet 8 inches in height; dark complexion; full face; speaks generally in a low tone of voice; reads well, and may possibly write; a very plausible, artful, polite negro.

Also, his wife MILLY, aged about 26 years; about 5 feet 4 inches in height; an very fat, stout woman at that time; has uniformly a pleasant countenance; is an excellent cook and seamstress; was raised by Wm. Mills, of Sumter District.

They took with them three children, viz:

CARTER, the eldest, a bright mulatto boy, aged about 7 years. 2d child, a girl named CAROLINE, aged 4 1/2 years. 3d, and infant boy when they absconded, named ELIAS. It is possible the they may have, by this time, another child, being about two years since they have been absent.

I will give the above reward, of \$75 each, for the fellow and the wench - and \$33.33 cts for each of the children, delivered in any goal in this State.

Should they have been stolen, I will give \$400 on proof to conviction. There is but little doubt they were assisted in getting away from Winnsboro.

Robt. English

Sumter District, SC Oct 15, 1833

Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser

January 7, 1834

\$40 Reward

I will give the above reward for the apprehension of MAJOR and HANNAH two of my slaves who have absconded within a few days past; or twenty dollars for either. [the description of Major follows - his presumed destination does not coincide with hers].

Hannah is about 20 years old. rather square in make, very black, with glossy skin. I have reason to believe that she is to be found in the neighborhood of Dr. Kennon's, in New Kent, or at Capt. Kennon's, Dr. Braxton's, or at Mr. Charles Braxton's, in King William.

Thos. Macon, late of New Kent

*Richmond, Virginia, Police Guard Daybook, 1834-1843, Acc. No. 1483 - M214 P,
University of Virginia*

1834

February 23, 1834

Mr. William Anderson's Malinda Runaway this evening. Malinda is dark complected, about the usual size, rather tall. thick lips, down look when spoken to and a scar on one of her sides from blistering.

May 6, 1834

Mrs. Morgan's woman Bridget runaway a few days since. She is tall and stout built, dark brown complexion, 35 years of age. She formerly lived at Mrs. Shields. A liberal reward is offered for her apprehension.

June 22, 1834

Mr. Bacon Tait's woman Rachael runaway. A mulatto woman aged about twenty-six years. She was formerly the property of Henry D. Pegram. It is suspected that Rachael is at Dr. [?]'s kitchen, Joseph Mayor's kitchen or Eliza Johnson's. \$20 Reward will be given for her apprehension. She came in herself or was apprehended by her master in July.

Rachel, 15 yrs., apprehended

Margaret, 30 yrs., apprehended

Milly, 45 yrs., apprehended

Edy, 35 yrs., she returned to master

Marena, 14 yrs., returned home the next day

Ann, 18 yrs., apprehended

Milly, 24 yrs., apprehended

Julia Johnson, 21 yrs.,

Milly, no age given

Dianna, 30 yrs.

Mary, 16 yrs., returned to master

Fanny, 30 yrs.

1835

Mary and child, very pregnant, 24 yrs., apprehended four weeks later

Harriet, no age given

Milly, runs away again, almost exactly one year later, returned to master

Venus, 37 yrs., returned to master

Alecy, no age given

Jane, 25 yrs.,

Eliza, 24 yrs., ran away with husband Lewis

Molly, 23 yrs.

Girl, 16 yrs., has scrofula

Anna, apprehended

Judy, 40 yrs.
 Milly, 35 yrs.,
 Phillis, no age given, apprehended
 Betty, 20 yrs., returned home
 Isabella, no age given
 Betsey, 35 yrs., apprehended
 Isabella, 24 yrs.

1836

Maria, no age given, ran with husband, apprehended
 May, 18 yrs.
 Nancy, 20 yrs.
 Betty Ann, 18 yrs.
 Maria, no age given
 Roxcy, 20 yrs.
 Fanny, no age given
 Tener, 35 yrs.,
 Maria, no age given
 Lucy, 22 yrs.
 Jane, 24 yrs.,
 Delphey, no age given
 Ann Eliza, 13 yrs., apprehended
 Eliza, no age given

1838

March 27, 1838

Mrs. Alvey's girl Betsy is runaway, she is thick, chunky, thick lips and dark brown.

March 28, 1838

Mr. Charles Ellits girl is runaway, she calls herself Ann Ford, is 22 years old, middle size, rather full figure, nearly white, hair dark and straight, eyes gray, features regular and good, and quite genteel looking. She has trunks and considerable money stolen with her. \$20 reward is offered for her apprehended and delivery to his Master Engineer on the J[??]K Canal.

April 1, 1838

Isaac L. Cary's girl Becky is runaway. She is about 15 years old, black, slim, long nose, round features, [?] grounded Callico frock.

May 22, 1838

Mr. Richard Randolph's woman Cicily Page runaway from him in Richmond on the 12 of March 1831. She was then about 18 years old, her complexion rather blackish, her figure very good, slender and straight, fingers long and tapering, her eyes show more of the white than usual, very flat nose. She has a sister belonging to Mr. Walter F. Jones of Norfolk, one belonging to [?] Gibson, a brother belonging to Mr. Anderson, her father and mother belong to John Allen, who owns a mother of her sisters. She is a first rate seamstress, it is supposed that she has two or more children. \$100 reward is offered for her and children if she has any. Mr. Randolph resides in WmBurg.

1842

Fanny, no age given

Sophia, no age given

Jane, 40 yrs.

Ann, 16 yrs.

Lucy, 30 yrs.

Mary, no age given

1843

Eliza, no age given

Mary Dabney, no age given, pregnant

Agnes, 30 yrs.

Pheaby, 24 yrs.

Maria, 17 yrs.

Lucy Roan, no age given

1844

Ann Elizabeth or Christiana, 18 yrs.

1850-1860

Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser semi-weekly

August 8, 1854

\$100 Reward - Ranaway from the subscriber on Saturday night, the 16th of July, a Negro Woman named LUCRETIA. Said woman is about 35 years old, dark brown, above the medium height and well proportioned. She had when she left, a large bundle of clothing. I have every reason to believe she has been furnished with a pass or free papers.

I will give \$10 if taken in Rockingham, or Augusta; \$20 if taken anywhere in Virginia out of the above named counties; \$50 if taken in Maryland; and \$100 if taken in any other State.

My address is Bridgewater, Rockingham co., Va.

G.R. Gibson

November 17, 1854

Runaway - Was committed to the jail of Greenville county, Virginia, as a runaway, on the 1st day of September, 1854, a Negro Woman, aged about twenty-two years. Said Negro is about five feet high, of black complexion, stout built, inclined to be fleshy, and has no front teeth, except two in the under jaw. When committed, she had on a striped cotton coat. She says her name is HENRIETTA; and when first committed she said she belonged to Nathan Bagley of Perquimans county, North Carolina. She now says that she belongs to Willis Bagley, of the same county. The owner will come forward, prove his property and take the Negro, or else she will be dealt with as the law directs.

R.W. Deakins

Jailer of Greenville county

November 24, 1854

We understand that three more colored woman belonging to Mrs. Armistead of this town, have disappeared since Saturday. Two of them were hired out in Norfolk.
Portsmouth Transcript

February 13, 1857

\$50 REWARD - Absconded from the subscriber the 24th of December last, a Negro Girl named MARTHA, she is black, five feet three or four inches high, stout made, about seventeen or eighteen years of age, and has tolerably long hair. We purchased Martha at the Auction sale of Messrs. Dickinson, Hall & Co., of this city, the 19th of December last, of a gentleman named Vernon P. Jones, with whom we have no acquaintance, nor do we know where he lives. We should be very thankful for any information concerning Mr. Jones, or his place of residence. The above reward will be paid for the girl if delivered to Messrs. Dickerson, Hill & Co., of this city, or secured so that we may get her again.

Enquirer copy

Smith & Edmondson

July 24, 1860

Runaway from the subscriber about the latter part of May, a Mulatto Girl, about seventeen years old, of medium size, black eyes, black eyebrows, and tolerable long black hair, which she generally wears platted. Her given name is HENRIETTA, but she answers as well to the name REESE. She is supposed to be enciente. I will give a reward of \$20 for her arrest in Lynchburg, or \$50 if taken and received in Richmond, or \$10 if arrested and received in the State, so that I get her again.

Richard Johnson, Tower Hill,
Appomatax co, Va.

October 16, 1860

\$20 Reward - Ranaway from Mr. W.J. Worsham to whom she was hired, about the 1st of May last, a Negro Woman named ISABELLA. She belonged to Mr. Ro. B. Corbin, of Caroline, and may be lurking about his farm, where she has a child or in this city, where she has been hired for several years past. She is of middle size and of dark brown complexion. She was quite tidy in her dress and wore ear-rings. The above reward will be paid upon her delivery to us or her containment in jail where we can get her.

Edwin Wortham & Co.

The Daily Dispatch

February 20, 1858

\$75 Reward - Runaway from my farm, Craigton, early in October last, a bright mulatto girl, named NANCY GRANTHAM, sometimes calling herself Mary. She has bright black eyes, long black eyelashes, thin visage, bushy head of hair, of sandy color, straight slab-like form, and steps long when walking, and is about fifteen years old. I will give \$50 dollars for her apprehension and delivery to me at my farm, and \$25 for the discovery of her harborers, with sufficient proof to convict them. She has relatives in the city of Richmond, living near the Monumental Church and was last seen going from Manchester to that part of the town.

Wm. A. Christian

December 18, 1860

Runaway - Twenty dollars reward - Runaway from my house, on Church Hill, on Sunday the 9th inst., my servant woman FANNY. She is black, genteel in appearance, about five-foot four inches high and slew footed, about twenty-five years old. I purchased her of Mrs. Herbert, in this city, the first of the year - think she is in or near the city. The above reward will be paid on delivery to me, or at D. & W. Currie's office.

George W. Allen

Groups and Families including Women

Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser semi-weekly

1852 - (lost exact date citation)

\$125 Reward - Ran away from the subscriber's camp, near Manchester, on Thursday night, the 9th instant, FIVE NEGROES, (four Men and one Woman,) named William, Leander, Armistead, Jim, and LEANAH.

Description: William is about 5 feet 10 or 11 inches high, black complexion, stout built, about 25 years old, and a slight impediment in his speech. He was purchased of Mr. Solomon Davis of Richmond.

Leander, about 20 years old, 5 feet 10 or 11 inches high, spare made, and black complexion. He was purchased of Z.D. Lancaster & Co. of North Carolina.

Armistead, about 22 years old, 5 feet 7 or 8 inches high, tolerably stout built, dark complexion, and has a very heavy head of hair. Purchased of B.M. & W.L. Campbell of Baltimore.

Jim, a mulatto about 22 years old, 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high, spare made, and has a heavy head of hair. He has a scar under his left jaw. Purchased of B.M. & W.L. Campbell.

LEANAH, a dark mulatto, about 25 years old, about 5 feet high and spare made. She is pregnant, supposed to be about four months gone. She was purchased of the Messrs. Campbell of Baltimore.

I will pay the above reward of \$125 for the arrest and delivery of the five Negroes to R.H. Dickinson & Brother at Richmond, or their confinement at any jail so that I get them again; or I will pay \$25 for each one arrested and delivered, or confined as above.

J.N. Andrews

November 9, 1858

RUNAWAY NEGROES

Ten negroes, three women, two children and five men, ran away from Pruntytown on Saturday night about eleven o'clock, taking with them seven horses. Their horses were discovered near the residence of Thos. B. Fetty, about six miles south of Morgantown, on the Fairmount Pike, on Monday morning about 5 o'clock. Three of them [the negroes] belonged to Zed Shields, three to Cornelius Runnels, three to Col. E.J. Armstrong, and one to Jas. W. Baston. Morgantown Star

We learn from a gentleman just arrived from the scene, that the negroes were overtaken in Fayette county. Pa., where a desperate fight took place, and the owners and others pursuing were beaten back. Col. Armstrong, of the pursuing party, was attacked by one of the negroes with a corn cleaver, and would have been killed but for the interference of one of his own servants, who stepped in to protect his master. Another of the party pursuing was fiercely attacked and badly injured, while the negroes made their escape. The fight took place on what is known as the Bachlor Farm. Day before yesterday a party of about twenty-five persons, from Morgantown, started in pursuit of the negroes, but nothing additional had been heard at the last accounts from either the pursuing or pursued. Wheeling Intelligencer

November 23, 1858

The cowardly desertion of Col. Armstrong by the majority of the white party was detailed also it was confirmed that the negroes were successful in escaping to "the Canadas."

APPENDIX B

Selected Newspaper Articles 1830s

The Constitutional Whig

October 24, 1831

A slave ship with one hundred and twenty slaves on board, was lately wrecked on Anegada, one of the Virgin Islands; she stuck so suddenly that it was impossible to unchain a majority of the poor unfortunate creatures, and a large number were drowned.

October 24, 1831

The Late Murder in Prince George - 5 slaves were condemned to death for the murder of their master Mr. Henry Lewis.

October 24, 1831

In Southampton they have discovered Nat Turner's cave hiding place.
From Lewisburg (WV) - a body supposed to be Gen. Nat was found in the New River.

June 5, 1832

Slavery in Kentucky - About fifty slave-holders in Kentucky, "under the conviction that there are insurmountable obstacles to the general emancipation of the present generation of slaves, but equally convinced of the *necessity and practicability* of emancipating their *future offspring*," have agreed to meet at Lexington, on the fourth of July, next, to form an association for that purpose.

Daily Richmond Times:

July 21, 1849

- Advertisement: - J.W. Randolph Co., Sheet music , "The Yellow Gal with a Josey On", an Ethiopian song.

Daily Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser

October 1, 1833

Free Papers Lost. One dollar will be given for my free papers, which were lost on Shokoe Hill.

George Allen - A Free Man of color

November 13, 1833

Shocking collision on the railway in Bordentown, Pa. Many maimed and killed, passengers reported . . . the cars were going at the rate of thirty-five miles an hour. Can this be true?

November 16, 1833

Very bright and noisy meteor shower 2-5 am - seen from Boston to Charleston.

November 23, 1833

DIXON & CLELAND begin to advertise as Auctioneers and Commission Merchants, dealing in sales of Real Estate, Slaves, Horses, Carriages . .

November 26, 1833

"A great number of slaves in the last six months have run away from their masters in this city, and effected a safe retreat to the north." The article goes on to assume that whites are "tampering" with them. Slaves "most easy in their situation" and "heretofore of the best character" are the first to run, "Eleven have disappeared since Weds. last."

November 29, 1833

Lost, on yesterday, my FREE PAPERS. The finder will be reasonably rewarded by restoring them to me.

POLLY JACKSON - A Free Woman of color

Jeffersonian and Virginian Times

1832:

For hire for the ensuing year, a Woman without encumbrance - a tolerable good plain cook, and perfectly honest, well disposed, and calculated for a small family. Enquire of

Selden & Cleland

April 30, 1833

Monies appropriated to pay the costs of removal to Africa of free persons of color who are willing to go.

1833

Advertisement: Dr. Bracley's concentrated compound of CUBEBS and SARSAPARILLA, An inoffensive , positive, and speedy remedy for the cure of GONORRHOEA, Gleet, Seminal Weakness, irritation of the Bladder and Urethra, Gravel, and other diseases of the Urinary Passages.

Richmond Enquirer

September 30, 1831

Stop The Kidnappers - Stolen from the subscriber, on the night of the 20th inst., a negro woman, DULCE, and two children. The names of the kidnappers are Peter P.C. and Champion Straughan, Peyton [?], and Joseph Moore. It is expected the above negroes will be offered for sale in Richmond. The said robbery was committed in the most daring and outrageous manner. The owner of the slaves overtook them, but was not able to rescue them. The subscriber forewarns all persons from trading for the said slaves, and

it is hoped that all persons friendly to good order, &c., will endeavor, if they should fall within the above offenders, to bring them to justice.

Benedict Wright,
Westmorland County, Sept. 21st., 1831

Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser semi-weekly

February 21, 1834

A BAKER WANTED - A person well acquainted with the above business is wanted to take charge of a Bakery, a colored free man would be preferred- the situation is a good one, application at this office.

December 15, 1834

SOMETHING NEW - Absinthe is extensively used as a favorite drink in Europe, and in New York, within the last few years. The subscriber has received a few bottles, the first ever in Richmond.

G. Picot

December 19, 1834

Eight Oaks for sale - I have been permitted to live until I now am an old man, and have become quite wearied with the management of land and negroes; I therefore wish to sell my whole estate. My property lies in Amelia County, Va., on the Appomattox River (southside) 40 miles west of Richmond, 50 northwest of Petersburg, 7 southwest of Powhatan Courthouse, and 10 miles north of Amelia Court House. My tract of land lies well, and well adapted to the growth of corn, wheat, oats, and tobacco, and by recent survey, contains 456 acres, and it is verily believed that all the gullied and galled land in the tract would not exceed 6 acres; all the other lively good land, and of considerable rich bottom (say fully one fourth of the tract) well reclaimed by ditches, &c. The situation handsome, and believed to be as healthy as any in Virginia, and has on it many springs of the very best water; The buildings are a good dwelling house, 52 by 32, in good repair; kitchen, meat house, large granary, corn house, negro houses, and five tobacco house[sic], two of them new, and new stable building. My negroes, say 26 in number, say 5 men, 6 women, 7 children, 4 boys, (three mere boys) and 4 girls are as likely and healthy as any man's negroes, and have been trained up to do different branches of business to great advantage; farming, planting, ditching, shoemaking, spinning, weaving, sewing, house-business, cooking, washing, and ironing, etc. Any person wishing to purchase said property, will please call on me, at my residence, in Amelia County.

John St. Clair

December 30, 1834

NOTICE - The commodious buildings which I have recently had erected in the city of Richmond, are now ready for the accommodation of all persons who may wish their NEGROES safety and comfortably taken care of.

The buildings were erected upon an extensive scale, without regard to cost, my main object being to insure the safe keeping, and at the same time the health and comfort of the Negroes who may be placed there at.

The rooms and yards for the Females are separate from those for the Males, and genteel house Servants will have rooms to themselves. The regulations of the establishment will be general cleanliness, moderate exercise, and recreation within the yards during good weather, and good substantial food at all times, by which regulation it is intended that confinement shall be rendered merely nominal, and the health of the Negroes so promoted, that they will be well prepared to encounter a change of climate when removed to the South.

These buildings are situated on the lot corner of 15th and Cary street, between May's Bridge and Bell Tavern.

Apply to BACON TAIT

February 7, 1835

One Hundred Dollars Reward - A reward of one hundred dollars will be given for the conviction of the person or persons, who burnt my Barn and Hay House at Westham, on the night of the 22nd inst.

J. Ambler

February 13, 1835

Wanted immediately, a stout BOY, or small man, a good rider, weighing between 112 and 125 lbs - liberal wages will be given. Apply at Broadrock.

March 20, 1835

NEGROES WANTED: I wish to purchase 30 Negroes, males and females, from the age of 10 to 25 years. The highest market value will be paid.

Bacon Tait Corner of 15 & Cary St.

March 24, 1835

Small pox in Virginia counties; vaccination advised.

April 10, 1835

Hanover Court House - For Sale - Tavern, and lg. tract of land, stables, etc. I will exchange this property in whole or in part for young negroes.

J.D. Andrews

Albemarle Land for Sale

The subscriber wishes to sell her plantation on Ivy Creek, five miles from Charlottesville, and four from the University; containing one thousand acres. About one third of the land is uncleared and first rate tobacco land - the balance is prime wheat land, and in a high state of improvement. Also, a mill on Ivy Creek, a never failing stream, with a good run of custom. There are three pairs of stones in the mill, the dam permanent, etc., etc. The mill will be sold separately from the land. I should like to sell at once and give possession this spring - If I do so, I will then sell Thirty or Forty likely Negroes, Horses, stock, & etc. Persons wishing to see the above property, will be shown by Mr. Wm. Gilmer or David Maupin, living on the place. Communications on the subject will be attended to, if addressed to

Charlottesville, March 13

Lucy Minor

NOTE: June, 30, 1835 - Lucy Minor added to her sale bill "80 or 90 Negroes, all ages."

April 14, 1835

Great Meeting of the Friends of African Colonization - First Presbyterian Church, Richmond.

June 12, 1835

(pg.3, c.6, item 6) Bacon Tait advertises for Negroes - the price of cotton is high, VA slaveholders would do well to sell now.

July 10, 1835

An Old Negress - Joice Beth, a colored woman, formerly belonging to the Father of Gen. Washington, and now 161 years old, is exhibiting at Wheeling, VA. She has been blind for 75 years, but retains her other faculties, and enjoys good health. She weighs less than 50 pounds!

July 21, 1835
 [Doggerel concerning the election campaign of Martin Van Buren, reprinted from the
 United States Telegraph]

Dear Dinah, let me press once more
 Those jet black lips of thine
 While round thy gentle form these arms
 I tenderly entwine

Once more upon thy sooty breast
 Receive thy warrior's head
 Who struck the blow when that great chief
 Tecumseh, fell and bled

Oh, Dinah! I must leave thee now
 And with thee all life's joys,
 My curly headed daughters and
 My golden visage boys

White people call me from thee, love
 Into a higher sphere
 Vice President they say I'll be
 If I electioneer

If Van and I should gain the day
 Sweet-scented Dinah dear!
 I have a plan which yet, my love
 None but thyself shall hear

Our Sukey is a charming girl
 Altho' a little dark
 And Van's a gallant widower
 And gay as any lark

Come kiss me, Dinah, and I'll tell
 On what I'm so much bent-
 It is to marry Sukey to
 The future President

R.M.J.

July 31, 1835

IMPORTANT TO THE SOUTH

F.H. PETTIS, Native of Orange County, VA

Being located in the city of New York, in the practice of law, announces to his friends and the public in general, that he has been engaged as Council and Advisor in General, for a party whose business it is in the Northern Cities to arrest and secure Runaway Slaves. He has been thus engaged for several years, and as the act of Congress alone governs now in this City, in business of this sort, which renders it easy for the recovery of such property, he invites, postpaid communications to him, enclosing a fee of \$20 in each case, and a power of Attorney, minutely descriptive of the party absconded, and if in the Northern regions, he or she will soon be had.

Mr. Pettis will attend promptly to all Law business confided to him. jy-28-

6m

N.B. New York City is estimated to contain \$5000 Runaway Slaves Pettis

[NOTE: The \$ sign is as appears in the published text but it is not clear to this reader or Margaret Cook of the Swem Library, what was meant; 5000 dollars worth of runaway slaves or merely 5000 runaway slaves thus making the dollar sign a typo.]

August 11, 1835

OVERSEERS WANTED

The subscribers wish to employ for the ensuing year, two Overseers to superintend their farms in Charles City and New Kent. None need to apply, unless they can come highly recommended.

Frances Jerdone, Wm. Jerdone

October 27, 1835

Desirable property for sale or exchange for young Negroes.

January 24, 1837

Negro Edmond King, "has straight hair, and complexion so nearly white, that it is believed a stranger would suppose there was no African blood in him . . . He was with my boy Dick a short time since in Norfolk, and offered him for sale, and was apprehended, but escaped under the pretense of being a white man"

February 28, 1837

To Owners of Slaves - I have for several years been engaged in hiring out Slaves for friends in the country, and as a number have expressed a wish for me to take their Slaves and attend to them as my own, and charge a commission, I shall attend particularly [to that] business.

It is well known to many who hire their slaves in this place, that they have been much neglected by not having someone here to attend to them, and frequently have sustained heavy losses in consequence; I will therefore, hire them out, see that they are properly clad, have strict attention paid them when sick, get the highest prices for their hire, and guarantee all their hires, for five percent.

Silas Wyatt

Wyatt & Wyatt, Richmond

[Wyatt's advertisement also included a list of 12 men in three neighboring counties as references]

November 8, 1839

Notice - This is to inform the public, that KEZIAH STEWART, a free woman of color, of the city of Frankfort, in the State of Kentucky, by her Power of Attorney, executed on the 24 day of September last, has constituted me her Attorney in Fact for the purpose of selling and disposing of her real estate in the city of Richmond and the vicinity thereof; and that by said power she has revoked all other and former powers heretofore executed by her.

B.O. Field, Esq.

Selected Newspaper Articles 1850s

Daily Richmond Times:

July 21, 1849 - Ad - J.W. Randolph Co., Sheet music

"The Yellow Gal with a Josey On", an Ethiopian song.

Daily Richmond Whig:

January 4, 1862

INDIGO, INDIGO - A supply of superior Indigo, now in store and for sale by W. Peterson and Co., 155 Main Street.

Religious Herald

November 25, 1858

There is now living in the city, says the Norfolk Day Book, a negro woman who is in her 120th year; her name is SARAH MALLORY, she retains all her faculties in a remarkable degree. Her youngest is now living and is between seventy and eighty; his youngest is 34, who himself is the father of an interesting family.

December 16, 1858

The death of an Indian aged 137 years is reported. We have noticed that most of those who die at such extraordinary ages are ignorant Indians, negroes, etc., a class whose knowledge of the time of their birth is usually vague and uncertain.

January 13, 1859

Two New York papers detail the use of opium in the U.S. - Imports now at 300,000 lbs a year - only 1/10th of which is used as medicine.

January 13, 1859

The whole number of slave holders in the United States is as follows: holders of one slave, 68,820; one to five slaves, 105,683; 5 to 10, 80,765; 10 to 20, 54,595; 20 to 50, 29,733; 50 to 100, 6,196; 100-200, 1,479; 200 to 300, 187; 300-500, 56; 500 to 1000, 9; 1000 to 2000, 2.

May 5, 1859 - Since the issue of the first patent for the sewing machine in 1842, 285 patents have been granted for improvements on it.

June 9, 1859

The *Detroit Advertiser* learns that seventy fugitive slaves lately arrived in Canada by one train from the interior from Tennessee, probably the largest number that ever escaped in one company. The week before companies of twelve, seven and five were safely landed, making a total within a week of ninety-four.

November 10, 1859

One of our Southern papers says Mary Stafford, of Savannah, Ga., recently gave a residence worth \$8000 to the Methodist Church there, and seventeen negroes valued at \$15,000 - total \$23,000.

April 12, 1860

The Colonization Society has appropriated \$10,000 to send free negroes expelled from Arkansas to Liberia.

Richmond Semi-Weekly Examiner

Tuesday, August 23, 1853

"We learn that there have been, recently, some indication of insubordination among slaves in that part of Nottoway, near Jennings' Ordinary. A day or two since, Capt. N. Ward's overseer was so severely beaten by one of his slaves, that his life is considered in danger. The slave afterwards absconded. Measures were taken at once to preserve proper discipline and order. Illicit trafficking and the liquor obtained in that way, is at the bottom of nearly every exhibition of turbulence among slaves in the State- who are indeed, the best fed and best clad farm laborers to be found anywhere."

March 13, 1855

Advertisement: Slavery Text Books - J. W. Randolph offers for sale the following:
Sociology of the South, or the Failure of Free Society; by G. Fitzhugh - \$1

Fletcher's *Study of Slavery* - \$2

Dew's *Essay on Slavery* - 50c

Slavery in America, An Essay for the Times; by R.K. Mason - 25c

Fuller and Wayland's *Discussion on Domestic Slavery* - 50c

De Bow's *Industrial Resources of the South*; 3 volumes - \$6

Uncle Robin in his Cabin in Virginia, and Tom without one in Boston;

by J.C. Page - \$1

Life at the South, or Uncle Tom's Cabin as it Is; W.L.G. Smith - \$1

White Slaves of England; by J.C. Cobden - \$1.25

Planter's Northern Bride; by Mrs. C.L. Hentz - 2 vol. - \$1.50

Hatchie, the Guardian Slave; by W.T. Ashton - \$1

The Holy Bible, at from 25c - \$40

January 4, 1859

The death of Dred Scott noted among other "Famous Dead of 1858"

January 16, 1860

Superior NEGRO CLOTHING at our Wholesale Clothing Warerooms, Nos. 163 and 165 Main St.

We invite the attention of whole sale purchasers of our large stock of NEGRO CLOTHING, of our own manufacture, and made of the most substantial materials as follows:

Extra Heavy Fulled Cloth Coats and Pants

Extra Heavy Tweeded Satinet Coats and Pants

Brown Cotton and Hickery Shirts

Heavy Red and Grey Flannel Shirts and Drawers

The above goods will be sold on as reasonable terms as can be found in any market.

Kent, Paine & Co.

Richmond Whig & Public Advertiser semi-weekly

July 25, 1852

John Williams, a negro man charged with the murder of Mrs. Winston and her child confessed that his wife JANE WILLIAMS had committed the murder; "... Jane ascertained that Mr. Winston was going to the country, she said that she would take the lives of the whole family before she would go with them, and since then he has prevented her from going into the house at 12 and 1 o'clock at night. The truth will out. ... "

July 30, 1852

The trial of John and Jane Williams, charged with the murder of Mrs. Winston and child will take place on the 9th of August.

July 30, 1852

New Orleans - July 26 - "... It is reported that the Comanches intend attacking Port Arbuckle and other stations on the Brazos; in fact a general Indian War is anticipated."

August 10, 1852

The negro woman Jane, was yesterday brought before the Hustings Court for the murder of Mrs. Winston and child. She pled guilty, without giving any particulars, and was sentenced to be hung the 10th of next month.

August 31, 1852

Charleston - Aug. 28 - Ellen Crafts - The Macon Journal says that Ellen Crafts, the fugitive slave whose case excited so much attention at the North a few months since, and who is now in London, has gone into the service of an American gentleman there, on condition that he brings her back to Dr. Collins, her owner in Macon.

October 1, 1852

Maysville, Ky. - Sept. 30 - Thirty-one slaves escaped from this place, a day or two ago, to Ripley, Ohio, where they concealed themselves and had not been arrested at the latest accounts. The Kentuckians are on the alert, as trouble is anticipated if they are not given up immediately by the authorities.

October 12, 1852

Health of Norfolk - It appears from the official report that during the month of September, there were 56 deaths in Norfolk - 39 whites and 17 colored - 7 died of yellow fever, 4 of bilious fever, 2 of typhoid fever, 1 of puerperal fever, 1 of malignant intermittent, 7 of cholera infantum, 4 of consumption.

October 13, 1852

Different sounds will travel at different velocity. A call to dinner will run over a 10 acre field in a moment and a half while a summons to return to work takes from five to eight minutes.

November 17, 1854

Leg irons, Handcuffs, and P Locks . . . "a large supply (Va. Made) in store and for sale low.

Theo. Robertson,
No. 65, Main St. "

Sidnam Grady, will continue to sell negroes for private sale at commission of \$5 per head, including small child with the mother.

December 5, 1854

Committed, Columbia Anderson, a free colored woman found residing on 3rd street with Chesterfield papers, was committed by the Mayor on yesterday for want of a city register.

November 28, 1856

E.A.J. Clopton - General Agent - ". . . Negroes for hire the coming year had better be sent to me as early after Christmas as possible."

December 2, 1856

Mayor's Court:

Sophronia, a slave of Mrs. Burton, was arraigned for using violence towards a little son of Mr. James Dunlop.

Mary, a slave, was ordered to be punished for using obscene language towards Mrs. Shick.

The AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY'S ship MARY CAROLINE STEPHENS, will leave Baltimore on the 29th instant and Hampton Roads about the 5th December proximo, with immigrants for Liberia. Persons wishing to send out letters or small packages may place the same at the Methodist Publishing House, 94 Main street, Richmond, by the 24 inst., or at the hardware store of Griffith & Wilson, Norfolk by the 31 of December.

Wm. H. Starr

Agent Va. Col. Society

December 30, 1856

Wanted - A white woman servant, capable of doing washing, ironing, and to act as a chambermaid. Apply at 219 Main street.

January 2, 1857

INSURANCE ON LIVES OF SLAVES - Agency of the Albemarle Insurance Company, of Charlottesville, Va. - This company insures for one or more years, at the customary rates. Losses are paid promptly.

B.W. Knowles, Agent

Office at "Stationers' Hall, No. 21 Pearl St

VERY IMPORTANT to owners of Slaves. . . The present high prices of Negroes should induce all persons owning them to effect insurance on their lives without delay. .

Balt. Life Ins. Co. - P.R. Price, Agent

February 13, 1857

We have received from Amelia C.H., the following statement of a sale of negroes, at Jetersville, on Monday, belonging to the Vaughn estate. The sale was conducted by L. Masters, commissioner, and J.N. Vaughn, administrator. Forty negroes [the discrepancy in the numbers of slaves listed is in the original - the sale ad listed 26 slaves] were sold at an average of \$702 1/2 - the aggregate proceeds being \$28,150:

Man, 70 years, \$85; do 60 years, \$105; do 45, \$805; do (curved spine) \$495; do 25, \$1,225; do 22, \$1,150; do 25, \$1,1125; do 30, \$1,250; do (blacksmith) 80, \$1,700; do (hernia) 20, \$910; do 20, \$1,360; do 25, \$1,150; boy 17, \$1,285; do 11, \$850; do 10, \$620; do [10?], \$685; old woman 70, \$70; do 50, \$50; woman (diseased) 35, \$505; woman 37, girl 14 and boys 12, 11, 9, 6 and 2, \$4,350; girl 8, \$800; woman 40 and infant, \$685; do and 2 children, 6 and 4, \$1,510; do and 3 children, 6, and 4 and infant, \$1,905; girl 14, \$955; do 12, \$830; do 11, \$660; woman 60, \$505.

Fire in Chesterfield: On Tuesday night a large barn, four miles from Petersburg, at "Delwood" the beautiful country seat of James Jones, Esq., son of the late Hon. John W. Jones, was burnt, destroying a large lot of provender, &etc., etc. Loss \$1000

Twenty-one negroes belonging to the Coleman estate were sold at Cumberland C.H., on Friday last, for \$11,117. There were several old ones and some children among them. [average price, \$529]

Valentines for sale - 6 cents to \$12 - Exchange Bookstore, Richmond

May 5, 1857

Virginia: At rules held in the Clerk's office of Exxex Circuit Court, on the 2nd day of February 1857, Richard L. Covington, Plaintiff, against James M. Haig, Defendant, IN AN ACTION OF DETINUE; This is an action to recover of the defendant a negro woman slave named Frances, the property of the plaintiff, of the value of one thousand dollars and \$200, the plaintiff's damages for the detention of the said slave.

June 2, 1857

HIGH PRICE OF NEGROES - Six negro men, ranging from thirty to forty years of age, were sold in Lexington, Holmes county, Miss. last Monday, for the average of \$1,618.33 1/2 each . . . This is said to be the highest price ever paid in this county for negroes. The same negroes were sold in 1849 at an average of \$700 each.

March 5, 1858

WANTED ONE HUNDRED YOUNG MEN for the United States Mounted Service, to serve in Kansas, Nebraska, California, Texas and New Mexico. Pay from \$12 to \$22 per month. Horses, accouterments, clothing, food and medical attendance furnished free of charge.

For further information apply at the Rendezvous, Franklin street, opposite Metropolitan Hall, Richmond, Virginia.

B. H. Robertson
1st Lieut. Second Dragoons
Recruiting Officer

May 4, 1858

A Quartet - Our pen recoils from the duty, yet it is our province to record the revolting fact, that a white woman, in Mecklinburg county, became the mother a few days since, of four children, two of whom were of her own color, and the other two black.

July 5, 1858

The body of President James Monroe (died 1831 and originally buried in New York), was reburied at Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond with full military honors and a parade.

July 23, 1858

SHOCKING MURDER IN BEDFORD - Mrs. Musgrove, wife of Christopher Musgrove, residing near Shallow Ford, on Staunton River, and about 20 miles south of Liberty, was most inhumanely murdered on Saturday last. The circumstances attending the murder, are stated by the Lynchburg Virginian:

It seems a negro woman, the servant of Mrs. M., was engaged in washing at the spring, a short distance from the house. Mrs. M. went to the spring as was supposed, for the purpose of giving the servant some orders or instructions in regards to her work. In a short time the daughter of Mrs. Musgrove heard voices as though engaged in quarreling; but not thinking of any serious result, did not repair to the spot for some time. Her mother not returning, her suspicions were aroused, and she went in search of her. On reaching the spring, she found the body of her parent in the branch, a short distance off, with her head crushed in the most shocking manner, but no other marks of violence on her person. The negro woman had disappeared, but after search being made for her, was found at a neighbor's house, a mile or two distant, where she had gone as she said for the purpose of having a tooth extracted. At the time of her arrest she appeared greatly confused - had blood on her clothing - and on being questioned gave very unsatisfactory accounts of her meeting with her mistress. On the morning succeeding her arrest, she was taken to Liberty and confined in jail. She stoutly protests her innocence of the crime imputed to her, but her statements are not believed.

August 17, 1858

Mayor's Court - John Walsh was held to bail in the sum of \$100 to keep the peace. This man was found guilty of severely beating his wife a few days since. Scarcely a day passes that some savage is not brought up for this offense. The punishment should be greater.

August 27, 1858 :

NEGRO STAMPEDE - Four negro men, two belonging to C. Pancake, Esq., and two to Michael Miller, escaped from the South Branch, Hampton county, on Saturday night last, taking with them four horses, the property of Mr. Pancake. Parties are in pursuit of them. The horses were found in a field near Cresaptown, Md., and sent back. The negroes are still at large. The liberal reward of \$1,200 has been offered for their apprehension.

September 3, 1858

Charleston Mercury - Slave smugglers and cargo captured - 455 started from Lower Guinea, 141 died, 314 alive. Mostly young men (246), and 60 females, also young. Detailed description of the food, housing, and behavior on ship board. [NOTE: September 7, The President decided that the "rescued Africans" would be sent back to Africa much to the dismay of the Whig and Public Advertiser]

September 7, 1858

John and Thaddeus, slaves to Benjamin Pollard, and Jesse and Sam, hired to Tinsley & Co., detected with forged passes, prowling about the streets at a late hour at night, were ordered to be flogged. This is another confirmation of what we said on a former occasion; that there are but few negroes living in the city who cannot read and write, and that their tutors are, with few exceptions, free negroes.

October 12, 1858

A duel was fought in Mississippi last month by S. Knott and A.W. Shott. The result was Knott was shot, and Shott was not. In these circumstances we should rather had been Shott than Knott.

October 22, 1858

Advertisement: Sewing Machines \$50

November 2, 1858

Mayor's Court - Frances Ann Thompson, f.w.c. [free woman of color], from Powhatan, and Mary Crenshaw, f.w.c., from Hanover were each ordered a chastisement for remaining in the city contrary to law.

November 9, 1858

Slaveholders Convention in Maryland - . . . on the second day resolutions were reported that free negroism and slavery were incompatible with each other, and should not be permitted longer to exist in their present relations.

November 16, 1858

CHILDREN BURNED - Mr. Nathaniel Tatem, of James City, in Madison, lost two cabins by fire on Wednesday morning last, and two negro children perished in the flames. [The first snow had fallen that week in Central Virginia.]

November 19, 1858

DEATH BY FIRE - Nellie, a valuable colored woman belonging to Lieut. Poindexter, was so badly burned on Friday, near Norfolk, that death ensued on Sunday. Her clothes accidentally took fire, in the kitchen near Lieut. P's farm, about 2 miles from the city. [she was among the 5 women, 3 white, 2 black, dead from fires in kitchens listed in this paper in the previous 2 weeks]

December 3, 1858

Death of the Oldest Person in Illinois - A negro woman, known as "Black Cocky," a native of Africa; who was freed from slavery some years since, and has been living for some years past in a small log cabin near Dixon, in Illinois, was burned to death on Fri. last. While she was in a spasm her hut took fire and she perished in the flames. She was *one hundred and twenty* years of age - the oldest person in the State, and probably as old a person as can be found in the United States.

The Georgia House of Representatives passed a bill to outlaw first cousin marriage asserting . . . that many deformations of mind and body are of congenital origin from the practice of near kindred intermarrying with each other.

December 24. 1858

Mayor's Court - Peggy Cozzeus and Maia Powell, white women, charged with having an unlawful assembly of negroes in their house, were fined \$5, and committed in default of security for their good behavior.

January 13, 1860

High Prices for Hirelings - Messrs. Cook & Close, Agents of this city, have, during this season, hired boys from 12-14 yrs of age at \$120; girls 10-14 yrs, from \$20 to \$45; nurses and house servants from \$45 to \$75; cooks from \$85 to \$100; ordinary man from \$160 to \$180 per annum. This is unmistakable evidence that the Harper's Ferry riot has not diminished the demand for slave labor in the Old Dominion.

January 21, 1859

Philadelphia, Jan. 19 - Funds are being collected here to enable Bob Butt Sexton, of Norfolk, who accompanied the remains of the Yellow fever victims, to purchase his own freedom and that of his family.

April 1, 1859

Advertisement: Staunton River Land For Sale - 3155 acres - tobacco, wheat and woodlands; divided into ten 300 acre rental farms with dwelling houses, net income in 1858 was \$7200.

April 15, 1859

Advertisement: City lot Richmond, 29 ft X 110 ft - \$1,050.

September 9, 1859

Couldn't Stand Freedom - The Bayou Sarah (La) Ledger states that the slaves of the Carney estate, who were liberated and sent from East Feliciana to Cincinnati a few months since, returned on the steamer a few days ago; they prefer slavery in Louisiana to freedom in Ohio.

September 9, 1859

The Slave Trade - The unceasing demand for negro labor on the plantations of the Southern states, and the subsequent high prices for slaves which have prevailed for a series of years have caused a large increase of the slave trade, in this city - the annual sales, at auction and privately, ranging from three to four million of dollars.

Richmond, from the centrality of its position, and accessibility by railroad, has long been the resort of traders, and the daily auction sales are thronged by buyers and sellers. The establishments where this business is conducted are concentrated on Franklin street, between Mayo and Wall streets. The competition of late, has been very active, and in several instances, extraordinary prices have been obtained. A few days since, a large sale took place at the auction rooms of Messrs. Pulliam & Betts, and the spirited bidding took prices up to high figures - the sum realized proving quite satisfactory to the owners of the "niggers." This firm is doing a large business; its well arranged sales room, airy and comfortable jail, ensures success in getting fine prices, and unquestioned solvency, have secured for it a liberal share of the favor and confidence of sellers and dealers generally. Their establishment is situated on Franklin street, in the basement of the Odd Fellow's Hall.

October 14, 1859

A Ship Load of Coolies Burnt - The ship Shahjeehanpore, bound for the West Indies with coolies, was burnt at sea July 1st. The crew, sixty-four in number, were rescued; but all the coolies, to the number of 340 souls perished.

October 18, 1859

EXTRAORDINARY INTELLIGENCE FROM HARPER'S FERRY; 12
dispatches in the telegraph section.

[This is the first use of the telegraph to dispatch news by the Richmond press.]

November 4, 1859

John Brown sentenced to death - his final speech to the court.

December 2, 1859

South Carolina Legislature - Columbia - Nov. 30 - The Legislature met on Monday. The Governor's Message is chiefly on State affairs. It recommends that in case of the election of a Republican President, they cooperate with the South in defense of Southern institutions.

December 16, 1859

Malignant Sore Throat [Diphtheria] - many dead in Valley - Richard Sly, near Waynesboro, lost 7 of his eight children.

December 22, 1859

Negro Hiring for 1860 - All the following men advertised their services: E. Echo, E.A.J. Clopton, T. Bagby, L. Lewis, Wm. Phillips, Rawlings & Holliday, Cocke & Close, P.M. Tabb, E. Dabney, L. Hill, and Ro. Lyne.

January 10, 1859

Advertisement: 1000 acres in Surry county, 6 miles from the James River - House, kitchen, cabins, barns, stables, springs, \$5 per acre.

January 31, 1860

Sentenced to Be Hung - Charleston Jan 29 - Francis Mitchell, late porter of the steamship Marion, was yesterday sentenced to be hung on the 2nd of March, for attempting to assist a slave to escape from the State.

March 9, 1860

Advertisement: Drs. Hancock, Peachy & Lockett announced the opening of their slave hospital on Main St.

June 15, 1860

Infanticide - A negro woman, named EMILY, belonging to the Keesee estate, in Charles City county, and hired to Mr. Henry N. Bowers, of the city, is in custody awaiting examination before the Mayor, on the charge of infanticide. The child was born on the night of the 3rd instant, and the fact being discovered next morning, by traces of blood, Emily was taken to task about it. She was engaged in her ordinary household duties, and resolutely denied the *accouchement*, but her condition had been previously suspected, and Mr. Bowers, observing her feebleness, required her to go to bed. A few days afterwards, she confessed she had given birth to an infant, and it had been removed for interment by a negro man who had been in the habit of visiting her.

On Sunday morning, Emily absconded from Mr. Bower's, and started upon foot for Charles City county, but was arrested about nine miles below the city, brought back, and committed to the county jail as a runaway.

She then informed Mr. R.B. Lyne, the agent by whom she was hired to Mr. Bowers, that the negro did not take away the child, but she threw it into the sink, in the rear of Mr. Bower's premises. No search has yet been made to prove the truth or falsity of this statement. The police were in quest of the negro man implicated, yesterday, and if they were successful in their search, he will be brought before the Mayor today.

June 19, 1860

Steven, slave of Dr. Wm. Martin, charged with being accessory to the infanticide of a negro child, borne by Emily, slave of H.N. Bowers, discharged.

October 5, 1860

Gates Co. North Carolina - . . . Mr. Willie Riddich, of this county, sold today to a Southern planter, 85 negroes for \$85,000. Payments to be made in six annual installments, with interest. This is the largest sale of negroes ever known in our section. They embrace old and young - his entire family save six. - Petersburg Express.

October 26, 1860

Blind Tom - musician and singer - A glowing review of the performance, praising his work, his voice, his talent and yet also describing him as "a little woolly-head monkey of an Ethiopian."

November 2, 1860

[3 days before the Presidential election]

Appropriate Present - Some one proposes that if Lincoln should be elected, a subscription should be raised for the purpose of buying up all the blackest, ugliest, meanest, and most odoriferous "niggers" in the State to be sent, by express, to the chief priests of the nigger worshippers, who are notorious for their abuse of the Southern people.

November 6, 1860

Proposals - Will be received by the Superintendent of the Penitentiary for the hire for the ensuing year, commencing on the Jan. 1861, of 127 convict slaves and free negroes, whose punishment has been committed by the Executive to labor on the public works for life. Of the number 111 are men and 16 WOMEN; 98 of the men being first rate hands, and all of the women the same quality. Any information desired can be obtained by application to Col. Jas. F. Pendleton, Superintendent of the Penitentiary. The proposal must be under seal, directed to him, endorsed "Proposals for the hire of convicts," and must be submitted by the 1st day of December next.

November 9, 1860

A Young Lady Murdered by a Slave Woman - (the slave woman was hung without trial) Fulton, Calloway, Co. Mo.

November 23, 1860

Large numbers of free negroes are coming north from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, in anticipation of hostile legislation by the Legislatures of these States now in session. A letter from Toursville, NC, says: "In anticipation of this I saw 23 free negroes get on the cars this morning to leave the State; and am told that it is a daily occurrence to see numbers moving for the same purpose."

December 25, 1860

Prolific - Very - A negro woman, named ELSIE, on the farm of Mason Trabue, Esq., in Chesterfield county, has become the mother of seven children within the last thirty-three months - twins twice, and triplets last week. She is only twenty-eight years of age, and has given birth since her marriage to thirteen children.

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